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No. 894
Friday
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The Value of Silence

THERE ARE times when the only appropriate response to tragedy is one of mute reflection. Mere words cannot convey the feelings engendered by the appalling events of the past week.

Whatever the temptation to rush into print with facile comment or instant analysis, such temptation must at all costs be resisted. *(Keep going. Ed.)*

Neither should we permit intrusion into private grief under the cover of public interest. We do our best on such occasions to stand in silence as testimony to an inexplicable horror which is of essence beyond explanation. *(Still keep going. Ed.)*

It is important to admit that words are sadly inadequate to convey our bewilderment and sorrow and it cannot be stressed too often that silence remains the only dignified option.

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(That really is enough. Ed.)

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Mortimer House, 230-236 Lavender Hill, London SW11 1LE
Tel: 0171-228 0588. Fax: 0171-924 3719.
Email: eyesubs@cix.compulink.co.uk

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.
Tel: 0171-437 4017. Fax: 0171-437 0705.
Email: strobes@cix.compulink.co.uk
WWW:http://www.intervid.co.uk/intervid/eye/gateway.html

COLOUR SECTION

THE passionate campaign launched by David Mellor MP to ban the sale of handguns in the wake of the Dunblane atrocity should be viewed in the context of his entries in the new 1996 Register of MPs' interests.

He declares "consultancies" with British Aerospace, incorporating Royal Ordnance, which together make up the largest arms company in the country; Vosper Thorneycroft, which specialise in selling fighting ships; Short Brothers of Northern Ireland, which make sophisticated weaponry of every description and sell it all over the world; and RACAL Tacticom, a subsidiary of another of the Big Five British arms companies.

No other MP in history can claim consultancies with four big arms companies with contracts to sell killing machines almost everywhere.

Cynics may say there might be some conflict between demanding a ban on the sale of handguns in Britain and enthusiastically flogging much more lethal arms of all kinds mainly to dictatorships in countries like Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia.

They should remember Mr Mellor's historic appearance on a couch with Saddam Hussein in February 1988, a few weeks before the gassing of 5000 Kurds in Halabja by order of Saddam. Mellor was there as a Foreign Office minister to offer Saddam a new bunch of trade credits worth £175m, and, at the same time, to pass on the Foreign Office's deep concern at the human rights record of the Iraqi regime.

So deeply concerned was Mr Mellor about this record that he travelled again a year later to Baghdad, this time as Health Minister, to sing the praises of the Iraqi health service, which he likened to the British NHS. The comparison did not impress the Kurds poisoned or injured by the Iraqi regime who were not allowed access to Iraqi hospitals.

IN ISSUE 892 the *Eye* published the names of more than 50 civil servants who have joined the boards of commercial companies under a new government scheme to "build bridges" between government and private industry.

We wondered whether any of these companies had ever benefited from the civil servants' departments. Information has since been pouring in, revealing for instance:

1) The case of Dr Ann Eggington, who has just taken over as head of Branch One of the DTI competition policy division. She was named in the *Eye* list as a director of BOC (UK).

One company likely to appear soon before the Monopolies and Mergers Commission is British Gas, which has fallen foul of its regulator for bumping up prices on its monopoly transportation network. British Gas may also want to hear the MMC's views on two other issues: its pricing formula for supplying gas to consumers, and "take-or-pay" contracts. When the MMC finally pronounces, their report goes to the Department of Trade and Industry, whose President Ian lang will seek the advice of its competition department — prop. Ann Eggington, director of BOC. The chairman of BOC is Richard Giordano, chairman of British Gas.

2) The case of RG Purnell, at the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, who was named as a director of HR Wallingford. Mr Furnell is MAFF's Flood and Coastal Defence Chief Engineer. The July 1995 edition of *Flood and Coastal Defence* lists no fewer than four major new research projects carried out by MAFF which have been contracted to HR Wallingford — "manual on sediment transport in rivers"; "numerical models of non-linear surf zone processes"; "development of instrumentation for in situ stress measurement"; and "estuary process and morphology research: scoping study".

3) The case of RA Hathaway, also at MAFF, who was named as a director of RHM. Mr Hathaway is head of the cereals and set aside division, where he is involved in important discussions with one of Britain's biggest cereals firms, RHM (formerly Rank Hovis McDougall).

CURSED Yorkshire Water is sending out more PR guff to its 1.8 million customers along with a glossy leaflet called ***What's going on with our water supplies.***

Customers who asked if the cost of the leaflets would further increase their bills were told the printing cost only £50,000. But nothing was said about the cost of accompanying letters, envelopes and postage for the 1.8 million mailshots.

The letter accompanying the leaflet told customers that any costs incurred from the drought would not increase their bills. Two weeks later their bills rose by 5.6 per cent.

● THE first round of involuntary redundancies has been announced following **Welsh Water's** takeover of South Wales Electricity (SWALEC). Nine of the sackings were announced in a low-key piece in a local paper. All nine are senior managers who, quite coincidentally, ran SWALEC's ill-fated defence against the takeover. No hard feelings, then!

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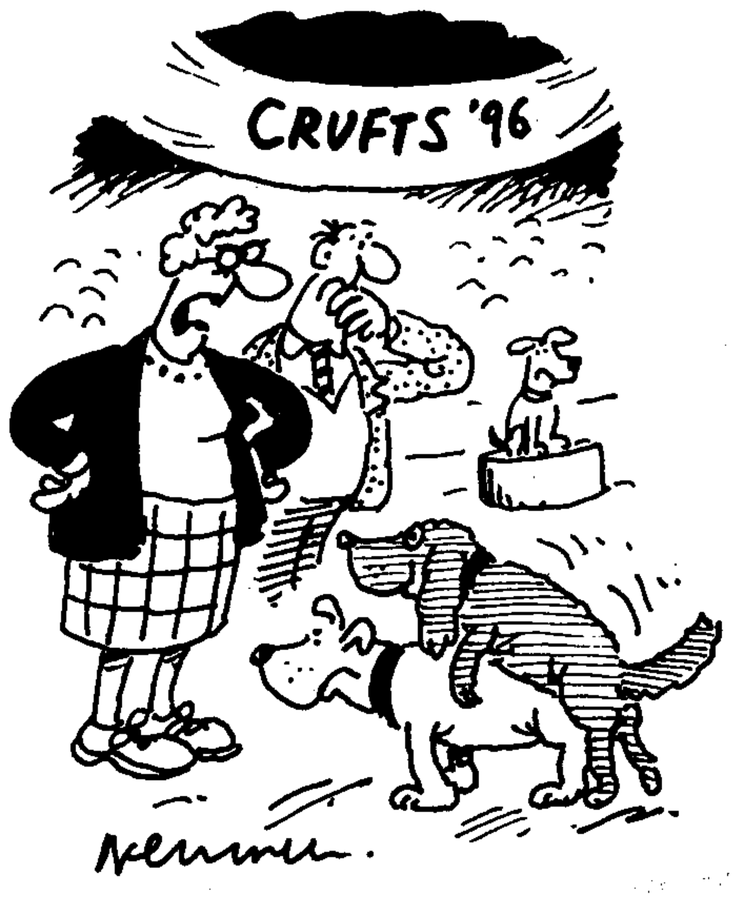


"He's unfit to be a King Charles Spaniel"

Closing down sale
(furniture, catering, Bric-a-Brac)
Saturday 16th March
St Pancras Conservatives,
Camden New Journal

Street Of Shame

QUITE a few barrels were scraped by hacks filing on the subject of Dunblane last week (Marje Proops, Linda Lee Potter, David Seymour, the Rev. Paul Johnson, St. Taki the Theologian, Dr Raj Persaud, pick your own least favourite) but perhaps no barrel was scraped so spectacularly as by PA News who had managed to track down Dunblane's Santa Claus.

In a wire headed "1 Dunblane Santa" on Friday, we learned that "Christmas is never going to be the same in Dunblane" and that "at the moment he could not bear to think about next Christmas, but his Santa Claus outfit would be waiting if he was called for". Pass the sickbag.

DUNBLANE: Why, oh why? Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill has no doubts. "We have created a quagmire from which monsters are bound to emerge," he thunders in the *Sunday Times*.

And who created the quagmire? Why, the British media — which "revels in slovenly speech and yob behaviour". Some of the movies shown on satellite television "are a disgrace that no self-respecting adults should watch, much less let their children near". Worse still, "fashionable opinion" has little time for the nuclear family: "so we continue in our descent into barbarism..."

Brillo's own enthusiasm for the nuclear family is such that he remains resolutely unmarried, preferring to cavort in nightclubs with an ever-changing cast of babes and bimbos. His aversion to yobbishness was so pronounced that he felt able to work for more than a decade for Rupert Murdoch, owner of the *Sun*. And the man who now denounces satellite TV cannot, surely, be the Andrew Neill who was from 1988 to 1990 chairman of Sky television?

***INDEPENDENT* editor Charlie "Gorbals" Wilson showed his far-sightedness last month by summoning the paper's Scottish correspondent, John Arlidge, to London to be sacked. Following Arlidge's departure, Wilson closed the *Indie*'s Edinburgh office, having apparently decided that his native land was no longer newsworthy.**

Since then Gorbals has had to spend a small fortune flying hacks north of the border to deal with the little local incident in Dunblane.

When news of the massacre reached London, chief reporter Steve Boggan and several colleagues were immediately despatched to Dunblane. But their departure was slightly delayed as they discovered that the primitive Tandy laptops used by *Indie* hacks on assignment had all disappeared — part of another cost-saving measure, presumably. There were no mobile phones available either. So the cash-strapped paper had to shell out yet more money on equipment.

No wonder morale is so abysmal. When Gorbals carried out his latest purge, three weeks ago, a long queue of hacks formed outside managing editor Colin Hughesless's office, all begging to be sacked. "I know it's not a voluntary redundancy programme," one whimpered, "but *please* get rid of me."

THE *Indie*'s cash crisis is having all sorts of unfortunate consequences. Earlier this year one of the paper's few remaining readers, David Lockwood, won a competition in the Diary for which the prize was to be "a bottle of bubbly".

Two months on, Lockwood is still waiting for his champagne. Calls to the Diary have elicited the following replies: "It takes ages to get that sort of thing done around here"; "There's a big backlog in payments"; "The person responsible is on holiday"; and, finally, "The person responsible has just been made redundant".

MILLIONAIRE Labour peer Lord Hollick has made his first move in what will eventually become a full-blown putsch against the Tory "press baron" Lord Stevens of Ludgate. The clearest sign of impending revolution is that the absurd bronze bust of the megalomaniac Stevens has been removed from the foyer of Express Newspapers' Blackfriars HQ, aka the Grey Lubianka.

Only a month after Hollick's MAI Group and Stevens's United Newspapers formed their unholy alliance, Hollick's managers are already swarming around the *Express* building and have fired the hated Struan Coupar, personnel director. Coupar's popular deputy, John Honeywell, looked briefly smug on hearing the news, assuming that he would step into his boss's shoes. He looked rather less smug three days later, when he too was sacked.

Senior hacks who owed their job-security to Coupar are now trembling in their boots — particularly Phil Walker, the dunderheaded editor of the *Daily Star*, who has often entertained Coupar at "Weasels", his aptly-named country cottage in Norfolk. Also worried is *Star* deputy editor Peter Hill, a regular sailing companion of Coupar.

Still, they are putting a brave face on it. Following a recent *Eye* story suggesting that the puritanical Hollick might put a stop to the boozing habits of *Star* executives, Hill removed the contents of the editor's drinks cabinet and displayed them on his desk at morning conference. The next morning, not to be outdone, Walker returned after a day off and distributed copious quantities of Budweiser to all the sub-editors who had worked on the paper's coverage of the Aldwych bomb. Alas! That afternoon, Lord Hollick and his entourage paid a surprise visit to the *Star*'s newsroom — only to find the floor knee-deep in empty beer bottles.

THE *Daily Mirror*'s campaign to save Pulp singer Jarvis Cocker from prosecution after his stirring and animated protest against Michael Jackson at the Brit Awards led to "amazing scenes" of jubilation last week.

Cocker thanked "Mirrorman Matthew Wright" and, brandishing a "Mirror Justice For Jarvis T-shirt" confided that "it seemed that the whole world was against him" following Inspector Knacker's investigation of his spontaneous gesture of good fun. "Reading all those gestures of support were a tremendous boost," he told Wright.

Reading the *Mirror* three weeks before would have been less encouraging however. For there on the front page was an article about "loutish Cocker" and his "yobbish behaviour" by, er, Matthew Wright.

FANS of the product puffs that pass as "personal finance" copy can play a new game — spot the gratuitous mention of fund management group Schroders.

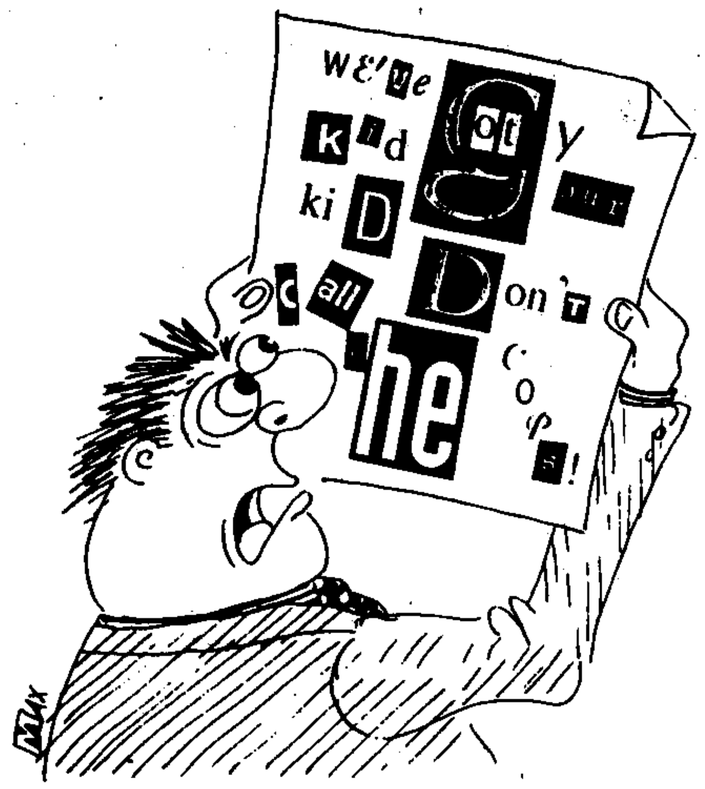
The *Sunday Express*'s Stephen Day was early in the frame, referring to the group in an article he penned for the March issue of *Moneywise* magazine. The *Evening Standard*'s Robert Cole hailed Schroders as a "giant in the personal equity investment arena" on 12 March, while the *Mail on Sunday* section headed by Jeff "Presstrip" Prestridge saluted the group and "star UK fund manager Jim Cox" in a long article entitled "Pep Frenzy boosts Schroders" on 3 March. This quotes, without qualification, Schroders' view that "investor confidence is sky-high".

None of this has any connection with a letter sent on 6 February by Schroders inviting selected journalists including Day and Presstrip on a week-long, sky-high freebie to New York and Bermuda.

"All flights, accommodation, travel and entertaining will be paid for (sic) by Schroders and the only out of pocket expenses will be those which you wish to undertake (sic) on personal shopping and the like," trills Schroders freebie organiser Bridget Cleverly.

Bridget has promised that the entertaining will include helicopter trips over Manhattan and golf and yachting while the 15 chosen hacks sun themselves in the Caribbean.

Needless to say, the hacks are queuing up for this all-expenses-paid trip.



"My God! Timmy's been captured by graphic designers!"

THE first entry for our new "Emap plug" feature — drawing attention to the *UK Press Gazette*'s servile attitude to its new owners — comes from Bill Lawless, editor of *Trials & Motocross News*.

Last year, *UKPG*'s pisspoor gossip-writer "Dog" devoted a large part of his column to savaging Lawless's magazine for printing an over-long intro. Readers may have wondered why an item in a small motorcycle weekly merited such lengthy excoriation — unless they happened to know that Emap has a hugely profitable rival weekly called *Motor Cycle News* which has long regarded *Trials & Motocross News* as a monopoly-breaking nuisance.

IT IS belt-tightening time at Mirror Group Newspapers, which has been sacking *Indie* hacks and raising the cover price of the *Daily Mirror* to pay for the £10 million launch costs of its amusing cable station, L!ve TV.

But chief executive David "Rommel" Montgomery is, thankfully, unaffected by the austerity. When he took over MGN, in October 1992, the first item on the agenda of his first board meeting was an agreement to dish out bountiful share options to Rommel and his fellow-directors. Now that the options have matured, he has cashed in, flogging 500,000 shares at a net profit of £780,000.

Curiously, however, Montgomery is in no mood for celebration: he is too busy grumbling about the "unfair" government restrictions which prevent him from owning an ITV company. In a couple of weeks he will announce that he is taking his case to the European Court, where he intends to claim that the Dirty Digger's satellite monopoly is an infringement of the Mirror Group's "human rights".

As the man who has deprived *Mirror* staff of almost all their employment rights, he is of course well qualified to pronounce on these matters.

***OK!* the pisspoor imitator of the pisspoor *Hello!*, has been celebrating going weekly in style.**

The mag, the inspiration of pornographer Richard Desmond, publisher of such scholarly journals as *Asian Babes* and *Big Ones International*, flew a crew of hacks and fourth-rate celebs for a launch party on the Loire. Guests were entertained by the wit of Jeremy Beadle who, spotting Blois Chateaux, cried: "Chateaux? Must be the past participle of shit!"

At another *OK!* launch party at Drones of Kensington, two guests became so emotional that an ambulance had to be called to assist them home. Professional party-goer Dai Llewellyn turned up with two women in tow, but disappeared shortly afterwards. Reappearing with his flies at half-mast he told anyone who would listen: "I had to take them home to fuck them — but thought I'd pop back for a gossip."

HALLO!

THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! *BRIAN, so fed up with the whole Diana melodrama he is willing to give her everything she is asking, is putting his foot down over only one of the Princess's demands. That she keep her office and two secretaries in St James's Palace.*

The reason for Brian's unusual determination is simple: that's his London home. St James is a maze of corridors and it would be all to easy for him — or, even worse, his personal assistant, the bouncy Tiggy Legge Bourke — to bump into the Princess. Look what happened the last time the two girls met!

Diana is equally determined to keep her toe-hold in her husband's home simply because she knows it drives him so potty.

HALLO! A CONCERNED relation of Diana's seems to think the poor boy is potty already. She tells me that the heir to the throne never leaves home, even for official functions, without a pair of Camilla's knickers in his pocket.

The Marquesa's source is of course impeccable — Her Royal Pinkness, Dame Barbara Cartland.

HALLO! NOT only has Anna "Pistol Pants" Pasternak been able to flog her dismal TV 'interview' with James Hewitt, but M15 are clearly orchestrating a fiendish disinformation campaign. James, it is being put about, has a "tiny todger". One tabloid fell for this canard, screaming: "Hung Like a Rat".

Balls! The "Major", as the Marquesa first disclosed, is "hung like a donkey", in the words of a fellow former cavalry officer. Now the Marquesa calls another eyewitness. Last summer an elegant lady visitor to his Devon home was asked if she fancied watching Wimbledon on TV. 'Twas was only possible, it appears, in his bedroom. While the Marquesa's glam chum was left, Pimms in hand, sitting on the bed, James disappeared for a bath — bouncing out later, stark naked. "The boy was pink, darling, very pink," gasps my sophisticated friend. And?

"And very, very... um, big."

HALLO! *I HEAR some amusing news of my old friend Harold Pinter. Given that so many of his plays have been put on at the Comedy Theatre, he has suggested to the management that they should change the name of the theatre to "The Pinter". Lady Magnesia Pinter has generously supported her husband's campaign.*

Nothing has so far come of the idea. But Mr Tom Stoppard has come up with a typically clever compromise: instead of the theatre having to go to the trouble of changing its name, Pinter should change his name instead. To Harold Comedy!

HALLO! THE MARQUESA runs into Silvia Rodgers, wife of Bill, now busy on the Liebfraumilch and Vol-au-Vent circuit publicising her autobiography. In her company, talk turns to wives of once-Labour peers and thus, inevitably, to the ineffably grand "Lady Verushka" Wyatt and her daughter, leather-clad hackette Petronella.

"Lady Verushka of Weeford indeed!" snaps Lady Rodgers. "I remember her when she was Verá from Golder's Green."

HALLO! *A RECENT visit to the Vatican has not, alas, blessed the disagreeable Professor Richard Whitfield, megalomaniac Warden of St George's House, Windsor, the religious 'think tank' founded by Prince Philip (see last Eyes). His views are so extreme (single mothers should give up their children for adoption), that last year Save the Children Fund wrote a ferocious letter demanding Whitfield "refrain from drawing upon your previous employment with SCF in any public setting or statement".*

Curiously, "Family Values" Whitfield lives in the large Warden's family house in the grounds of Windsor Castle, while wife Shirley prefers to remain far away in Lyme Regis.

How has Whitfield survived damning internal reports which show unhappy staff regard him as "devious" and, "a bully who likes to pick on one individual, mostly women"? Charitably, his contract states: "There shall be no specific disciplinary rules applicable to the Warden's appointment."

Solicitors, the Eye understands, have warned St George's that "shedding" the Professor could cost £100,000-plus.

A new enquiry team is due to report to Prince Philip next month,and the dear old thing may have to do something.

HALLO! TO THE English National Opera, where a slim, leather-clad youth hands me a New York publication called *PARTERRE BOX (the queer opera zine)* where I am surprised to read the following: "Multiple orgasms are the order of the day at ENO. At intermission, there were more audience members at Brief Encounter (a nearby gay disco) than in the Coliseum lobby. The upper balcony and adjoining standing room are abuzz with homo testosterone. There's is actually an in-house men's bathroom you can retire to during the performance for sexual assignations and still hear the music (several couples took advantage of this convenience during *Turandot*)."

Worse than the Royal Opera House, obviously.

HALLO! WHEN stately bachelor and long serving *Sunday Times* music critic Desmond Shawe-Taylor died some months ago, he left his music effects — scores and CDs — to a nephew of the same name. Shortly afterwards the young Shawe-Taylor, shortly to take over as director of Dulwich Picture Gallery, got a call from a trustee of his uncle's will. Edward Heath, no less, had expressed a sentimental desire for a keepsake of his old, dear friend. Would that be in order?

Who could deny a former Prime Minister a little memento? But when the Grocer turned up at the appointed time, he had two large canvas bags. And when he departed there seemed to be rather few CDs left!

HALLO! SUE Lawley obsessed with sex? I do not know. It is, however, a question the nation has been debating ever since saintly Roy Plomley's widow complained Sue could talk of little else when interviewing "celebrities" on *Desert Island Discs*.

However, some years ago the London *Evening Standard* carried a brief item that the lovely Lawley's nick-name at Bristol University was "Yo-Yo Knickers". Quite rightly, this disgraceful slur was quickly removed from later editions. Does any reader have a copy of this invaluable collector's item for me to take to my desert island as a luxury?

'The Marquesa'

The Pied Piper of Hamas

GULF WAR II

MAJOR hostilities have broken out between the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, two supposedly friendly Gulf states. Their armed forces have been waging pitched battles in Fort Bliss, Texas, where military personnel from the two countries have been undergoing military training.

Following the victory of a UAE soccer team, a group of Emirs taunted 50 Kuwaitis in a nightclub. The outnumbered Emirs fled and locked themselves in their barracks. The Kuwaitis then set about trashing their rivals' cars.

The Emirs rushed out to defend their property, but were beaten back. The Kuwaitis then proceeded to wreck their opponents' barracks. When military police finally arrived they found several trainees unconscious.

When a senior Kuwaiti officer went to the UAE barracks to offer an apology he was knocked unconscious. In an attempt to force fraternization, the US army has organized joint disco-nights — under heavy military police guard.

The US State Department has attempted to impose a news blackout on this mini-war. But reports have reached Sheik Zayed, president of the UAE. He is furious, because his country was particularly generous to "plucky little Kuwait" during the Gulf War.

UNION BLACK

THERE was uproar recently when black faces mysteriously disappeared from publicity photographs of Ford's Dagenham plant workers. Amid the media storm some officials of the Transport and General Workers Union kept their fingers crossed that nobody would recall a similar incident in 1990.

A bevy of TGWU headquarters staff had been assembled for a cheery, smiling photo for a union recruiting leaflet. The office workers were understandably upset when they later discovered that on some of the leaflets two of their number, who were black, were missing, while another worker's complexion had been mysteriously lightened.

They complained to then assistant-general secretary Bill Morris, who found that an entire batch of leaflets intended for Northern Ireland had been altered. TGWU publicity officer Chris Kaufman and Northern Ireland regional officer Bill Freeman were given a good talking to as overseers of the project.

That cannot have had any bearing on Freeman's surprise decision last year to break ranks with his old Broad Left chums and support Blairite Jack Dromey for general secretary.

They Think It's All Over (T) (S) Footballer Ian Wright and Neil Morrissey from, appropriately, Men Behaving Badly join the Lineker and Gower teams, as Tony Hancock umpires the first in a new series of the laddish sports quiz. *79015*

Grauniad

IN THE TEAROOM

LABOUR'S Welsh MPs, the "Taffia", form a powerful bloc whose votes can be decisive in Parliamentary Labour Party and Shadow Cabinet elections. This week Tony Blair has to choose whether to continue to pay them the political equivalent of protection money or to bust their racket for good.

At issue is Harriet Harman's Shadow Cabinet seat. The Welsh, who hate toffs like Blair and Harman, support Newport West's Paul Flynn's call for the Shadow Cabinet elections to be brought forward to July — the first shot in a "dump-Harriet" offensive.

The Welsh's dislike is reciprocated by Blair. Just as so many once-proud pits in the valleys have been turned into museums of mining history, so the Welsh Labour Party has become an theme park of Old Labour values and class envy.

Last month's anti-Prince Charles outburst from Shadow Welsh Secretary Ron Davies was typical. Another malcontent is Ann Clwyd, sacked by Blair for going AWOL during a crucial Commons vote.

The leader's advisers are split. Some say sacrificing the telegenic but dim Harman to the mad druids would be conducive to party unity. Others want Blair to scrap Shadow Cabinet elections and pick the brightest and the best — unencumbered by placemen put there by the Taffia and its Scottish and Geordie equivalents.

'Urquhart'

ENERGY NEWS

PROSPECTIVE punters for the £2.5 billion nuclear sell-off are no doubt unaware that the company in which they are proposing to invest could face liabilities several times that amount.

The government has made much of the fact that a separate — and independently administered — fund will be set up to meet the decommissioning liabilities of British Energy, the privatised company that will own and operate the country's seven advanced gas-cooled reactor (AGR) stations and single pressurized water reactor (PWR).

Ministers have not been so eager to point out that this fund will not cover the biggest liability of all — the disposal of radioactive waste arising from the reprocessing of AGR fuel at Sellafield.

British Energy has discounted this burden to a cost of about £200 million but two academic researchers, Gordon MacKerron and Mike Sadnicki, suggested in evidence to the Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee that the figure should be £3.7 billion, if the company that operates the waste repository, UK Nirex, is to make a modest return. This is their lowest estimate assuming Nirex can complete the job on time and that the geology at Sellafield is suitable for a repository — something the company admits it will not know for another five years at least. The costs of moving the waste to another site could easily run into billions.

The government's advisers have hit on another way of making the British Energy proposition look attractive to the City. They have changed the notional discount rate for British Energy from two per cent to three per cent. The discount rate is calculated from the amount that the liabilities of British Energy are estimated at for the future.

The change in the discount rate has meant a paper reduction in liabilities, so, at the stroke of a pen, the clean-up costs have been cut by a third, or £7 billion.

British Energy, with DTI approval, has helpfully cut the amount of money it says will be needed for this work. The government's advisers on the sale, Barclays de Zoete Wedd, have approved the wangle — so it must be above board, mustn't it?

THE MP, HIS HIRED WIFE, THE SACKED SECRETARY AND A BUGGED PHONE

SIR Colin Shepherd, Tory MP for Hereford, spends much of his time jetting about the world as chairman of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. But he keeps track of what is going on at home by bugging his own telephones.

Until earlier this month his secretary, Hazel Ramsey, had worked for him for eight years. Curiously, for most of that time Sir Colin's wife Louise actually received the parliamentary allowance as a "researcher" from the House of Commons Fees Office — though Louise Shepherd did not deal with Sir Colin's constituency work and runs her own business selling jewellery and clothing. Out of Sir Colin's allowance of £28,000, paid to his wife, the real secretary, Hazel Ramsey, was paid approximately £11,000. The balance of Mrs Ramsey's salary, an additional £3,000, was paid by Shepherd's family firm, Haigh Engineering.

Four years ago the parliamentary allowance was raised to just under £40,000 a year. Louise Shepherd continued to receive her "stipend" from the Fees Office, but Sir Colin at long last made his real secretary "official". Hazel's salary continued to be "topped up" by the MP's family firm until 1994 when Haigh Engineering ran into financial difficulties and stopped contributing for Colin Shepherd's parliamentary secretary. Mrs Ramsey then began to work a four-day week.

Sir Colin's wife, thanks to this singular arrangement, has long benefited from the parliamentary pension scheme — unlike Hazel Ramsey, who has only been getting her pension credit for half the eight years she has been the MP's real secretary. Louise Shepherd also benefits from travel warrants available to an MP and his staff.

"This is an arrangement that Hazel agreed to and that I cleared with the Fees Office," explains Sir Colin. "My wife's business is just an amusement for her really. She runs my life, she is my right hand. We are, you see, a team." After Sir Colin's conversation with the *Eye*, he promptly returned to his constituency and gave Hazel Ramsey an ultimatum: resign tonight or be fired. She resigned.

FACT: The *Eye*'s information did *not* come from his secretary and Sir Colin knows this — he produced transcripts of our interview with Mrs Ramsey!

"My wife cannot speak to you as she had to sign a gagging agreement," Mrs Ramsey's husband, Richard, told the *Eye*. "Why Sir Colin should bug his own phones, I cannot say — but he has the proof my wife did not give you this information. I personally am extremely angry. My wife has been very shabbily treated — both by her employment conditions, and by her forced dismissal."

ANOTHER FACT: The MP was knighted in the new year.

FERRY LATEST

FEBRUARY'S prize for the Most Sensitive Commons Intervention of the month goes to David Shaw, the loquacious Tory MP for Dover, who kept bobbing up and down during a debate on ferry safety on 21 February. When he was called to speak, he delivered himself of this memorable passage on the subject of the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster in which 200 people died:

"The Herald of Free Enterprise disaster was not caused by design problems. There was one, simply basic reason why it went down — alcoholism among certain members of the crew."

Mr Shaw seems to have forgotten the following:

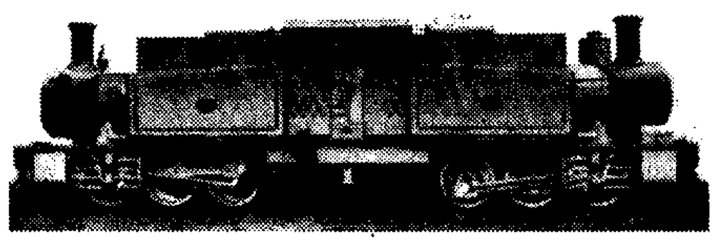
1) The Sheen inquiry into the Zeebrugge disaster went out of its way not to pin the entire blame for the disaster on the single seaman who failed to close the bow doors. The ferry company, a subsidiary of P&O, was lambasted for "the disease of sloppiness" which infected the company "from top to bottom".

2) A Dover inquest jury, after hearing the evidence of that sloppiness, brought in a verdict of unlawful killing.

3) After a long police inquiry, several people were put on trial for manslaughter including not only the seaman who did not close the doors, but the captain, the mate and directors of the company. All were acquitted when the judge refused to allow the case to go to the jury.

4) Since then, all sorts of design changes have been recommended and made to new ferries which plainly prove that the undivided car deck on the roll-on roll-off ferries was a principal cause of the immediate sinking which caused so much loss of life so close to harbour.

"I reckon it's Crusade War Syndrome, but the King won't acknowledge that there's anything wrong with me"



SIGNAL FAILURES

RAIL privatisation has been manna from heaven for consultancy firms — and judging by the sums they earn one might assume the advice they give is accurate. But it isn't.

Mercer Management Consulting was paid by the government to decide how BR's trainload freight business should be split into three bizarre geographical parts, one of them stretching from Penzance to Thurso, so they could compete with each other. This was peculiar advice since it is patently obvious that railfreight — which has steadily lost its market share for decades — faces more than enough competition already from road haulage, without having to worry about other rail operators.

Trainload freight, which had already been reorganised in the wrong way in the 1980s, was duly split into three parts in April 1994. Less than two years later the government is selling trainload freight as a job lot to US firm Wisconsin Central, so the industry has to go through the expense and upheaval of yet another radical reorganisation.

So what happened to the consultants who gave such idiotic advice in the first place? Have they been ordered to return their fees, to help cover the costs of the two pointless reorganisations which have resulted from their advice? Have they been struck off the list for any future government contracts?

FACT: Mercer Management Consulting has now won the contract to advise the government on the sale of BR's Railfreight Distribution arm.

THE Labour party seems almost as clueless about rail as the Conservatives.

Labour has the leverage to thwart the flotation of Railtrack, by promising to curb Railtrack's profits if it gets into government. As the May flotation date approaches Labour is saying nothing that might deter prospective shareholders; so it seems the party which implemented the majority of the Beeching cuts in the 1960s will be happy to take the credit for another decimation of our railways.

'Dr. B. Ching'

NOOKS and CORNERS

IN *Eye* 874 I discussed the barbaric proposal to close the splendid theological library of Sion College in London and make lots of lovely money by selling the riverside site on the Victoria Embankment. Since then, things have gone from bad to worse.

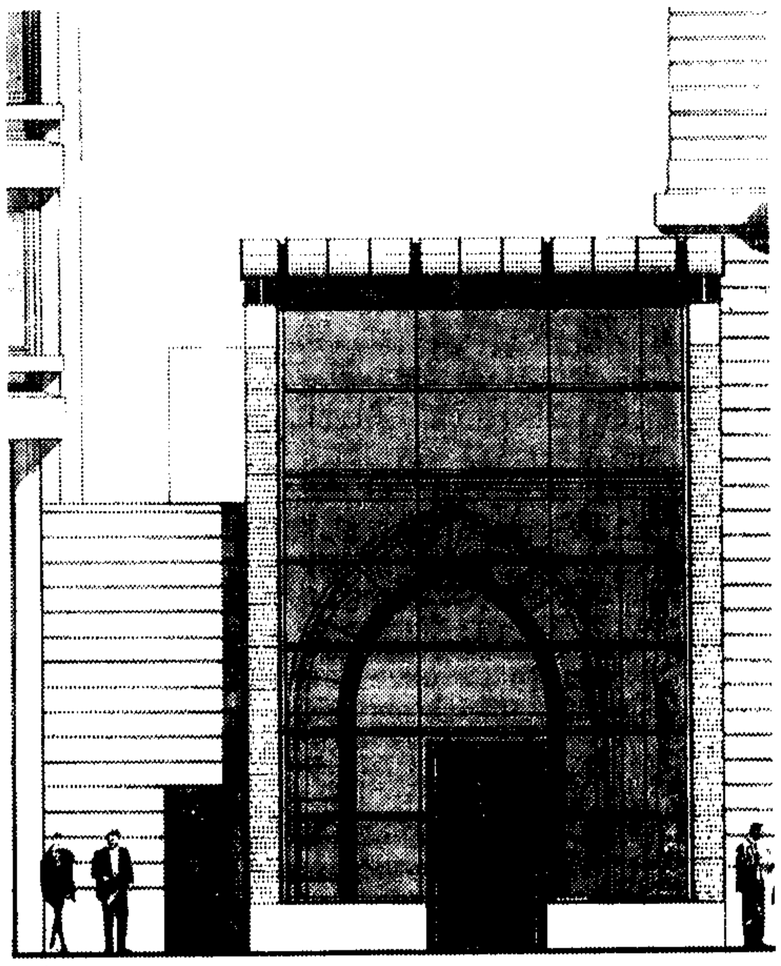
On 26 February the court of Sion College voted to sell the (listed) building of 1884-86 by Arthur Blomfield and disperse the collection of books between Lambeth Palace and King's College. Never mind that the books would then become much less accessible, and that the librarian at King's has said they would not be kept together and made accessible to Sion College readers. The money is the thing: money to acquire a new meeting place for the fellows — although it is not clear what they will get up to there together without a library, and why.

With that openness and fairness characteristic of the Careyite, synodical Church of England, the *Church Times* has placed an embargo on any discussion of this matter in its columns. Readers therefore remain unaware that there are promises of several million pounds to keep the library of Sion College open, that the City Livery Club — which rents premises in the building — owes the college a large sum of money. And the editor declines to publish letters arguing that it would be possible and preferable for the Sion College Library to remain in the existing building, becoming part of a consortium with Lambeth Palace, King's College and the Inns of Court, while still being a meeting place for London's clergy. In these days of clerical illiterates and barbarians, the Diocese of London may find Sion College redundant, but it could now serve the whole Anglican Communion.

Meanwhile a high court injunction has been taken out against the court of Sion College as it has been discovered that it has no authority to offer the building for sale and that the books belong to the readers. This one should run and run...

MY illustration shows an example of the modern architecture for which British architects are internationally admired. It is the elevation for the rebuilding of St Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate, designed by Messrs Blee Ettwein Bridges — that is, our old friend Anthony "Twee" Blee (Eyes passim ad nauseam).

St Ethelburga's was, of course, the innocent little medieval church in the City of London which, having survived the Great Fire and the Blitz, was half demolished by an IRA bomb. Now the IRA has resumed its war against civilisation, the argument that the church should be properly restored as a memorial to victims of terrorism everywhere has even greater force; but the previous Bishop of London went along with St



Helen's, Bishopsgate, who want to develop the site of what is now their chapel-of-ease. So, after a "competition", Blee's exciting design for a partial restoration, partial rebuilding was chosen (Eyes passim).

So, instead of a stone facade there is to be the bold, contemporary statement of a glass wall on Bishopsgate. Readers will observe the subtlety of the placing of the door and the artful relationship it establishes with the Gothic arch behind, as well as the careful positioning of the glazing joints and the skill with which the architect has used them to integrate the door and the flanking facades into an overall dynamic composition.

Surprising to find, therefore, that the Royal Fine Art Commission is unimpressed, finding it "not a sufficiently distinguished design to be acceptable in the context of a building of Grade I status... It leaves the Commission unconvinced so far that this concept embodies the best solution to the very difficult design problem presented by this site. The aspect of the proposal which [it] finds most unsatisfactory is the Bishopsgate elevation, which appears to express anything but a church... the Commission believes that the inadequacy of the present proposal necessitates further consideration of alternative approaches."

Quite so. And the best alternative on offer is that by the Friends of St Ethelburga. They have a scheme for a complete restoration of the church by Rothermel Thomas and Richard Griffiths, architects, and which has already secured planning permission and listed building consent from the Corporation of London. It is surely now high time for the diocese of London to stop playing around and do the decent thing and restore St Ethelburga's. Otherwise this one looks set to run and run...

LASTLY, news of Mrs Teresa Gorman MP following her unsuccessful attempt to stop Thurrock district council enforcing the law over her illegal mutilation of a listed building (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*).

La Gorman is organising a meeting at the Commons on 2 April "to discuss problems caused by current planning legislation. My own recent well publicised experience, and that of many people who have written to me, indicates that current legislation is far from satisfactory and needs to be addressed by people with hands on experience..."

I imagine that, from the point of view of a burglar with "hands on experience", current legislation about theft is far from satisfactory, too.

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

His [Peter Hobday's] voice is warm and avuncular, and even his name is perfect. *Hob day*. The first syllable is about domesticity and breakfast, poached eggs and tea. The second is shared with the name of the programme: quotidian, inevitable and welcome.

GILES COREN
The Times

But that doesn't hold true when you consider one of Freud's fundamental propositions — that you dream to process material you find too awkward or frightening to think about when you are awake. In that case, it should be Liam (Gallagher) we dream about rather than Noel, unless there is more to Noel than meets the eye. Is it that he represents what, in the back of our minds, we believe we could all be? Start off as an Inspiral Carpets roadie and end up the most respected musician of the decade? Or the equivalent of that procedure as it occurs in our own lives. Liam was born an icon. Noel was born a funny little kid with massive eyebrows. He could have been one of us. And as we read *Q*, listen to his "Wonderwall" or watch the master collect his Brits, we have to push those thoughts aside. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to cope with the monotony of school/work/roadying.

And behind this vague sense of inferiority, the dread that we will never live the dream, lurks the real nightmare, in which Noel is indeed the more awkward, frightening half of the Gallagher duo. Here, Liam is an under-evolved, shambling victim of his own innocence, insufficiently equipped to deal with complex tasks, while his bushy-browed elder brother is a power-hungry manipulator, hammering the competition in a world where rules are made to be broken. When we dream of Noel we touch the limits of what we aspire to and what we also balk at becoming. Gallagher is a dream-creature to be both worshipped and worried about.

EMMA FORREST
Independent

I've always been interested in maths and technology, but I never wanted to be in any profession other than the law because I wanted to serve the community.

PETER CARTER-RUCK
Guardian

Of course a whole variety of styles will be appropriate for worship musicians, but we have argued that rhythm is the commodity in greatest demand nowadays.

A good exercise is to take a piece such as Bach's *Prelude No.1 in C* (from the 48, Book 1), and experiment with playing it in block chords, rather than arpeggios, to different rhythms. If you can get hold of a drum machine, try the piece to a variety of rhythms, such as Latin, Heavy Metal, Reggae, Rap and so on.

Don't worry too much about Bach's subterranean revolutions: I'm sure he'd understand.

JOHN LEACH
Church of England Newspaper

If we are not energised by the Surrealist ambition, this stems in large measure from the peculiar and paradoxical fatigue of a culture simultaneously Post-Modern and fin-de-siècle, in which, by virtue of the former, even the ennui of the latter appears as a simulacrum of the real thing, a belated coming to belatedness itself.

CHRISTOPHER PRENDERGAST
London Review of Books

Naturally there are mornings when I'm too worn-out and sluggish for a normal working panic, and on those mornings I might well reach for *Madar* (ECM), with Jan Garbarek on tenor and soprano saxophones, Anouar Brahen on oud, and Shaukat Hussain on tabla. Instantly the oud, with a ripe and twangy sound both tart and mellow, flings up mystical bamboo ladders and walkways by which I make my bouncy way to that place in my head where work happens.

As the day wears on and I feel more solidly established in it I might turn to the three-CD set, *Astor Piazzolla, The Late Masterpieces* (American Clave), which includes *Tango: Zero Hour*, *The Rough Dancer and the Cyclical Night* and *The Solitude of Passionate Provocation*.

RUSSELL HOBAN
BBC Music Magazine

CONTRIBUTORS: C. Boyd, A. Nuttall, L. McCormack, T. Holman, M. Saunders, A. Non, B. Jackson.

£10 paid for entries

TV

A Man's World (BBC2)

Modern Times: Quality Time (BBC2)

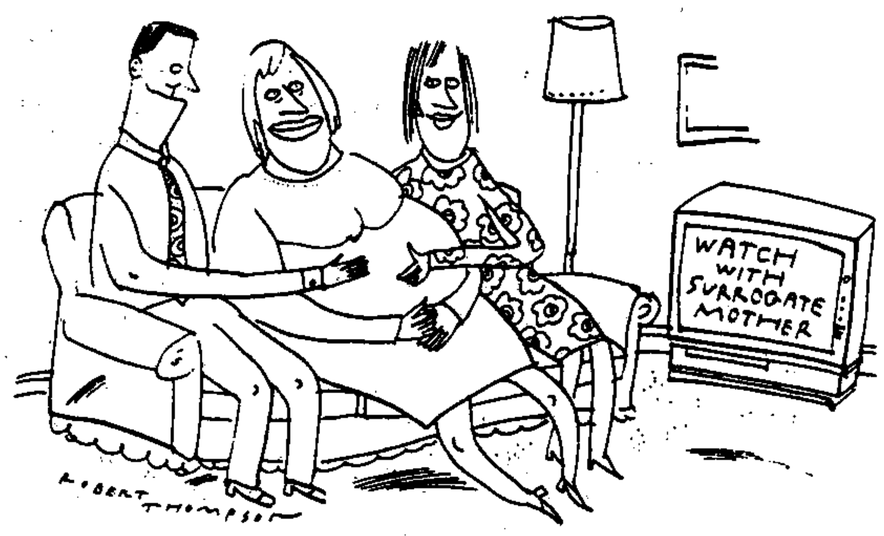
THE new rage in documentary programming is Gender Telly, shows about the differences between boys and girls.

BBC2 has just run a week-long male health season — *The Trouble With Men* — aimed at persuading blokes to examine their testicles, wash under their foreskin and put less salt on the veggie burger they should eat instead of meat. Last week, the channel began a six-part "oral history of masculinity", **A Man's World**, the first part of which was immediately followed by a little something for the ladies: **Quality Time**, a film about working mothers. Whatever they might have said about boys and girls, both films revealed a lot about the way that documentary television is going.

A Man's World, appropriately but surely not deliberately, is a load of balls. In advance the subtitle — "an oral history of masculinity" — seemed to suggest a slight cheekiness of tone, as if the word "oral" rings any bells with men, they're not generally historical. Some hope. All that oral means here is old geezers talking, gabbing about what it was like to be in short and long trousers in the early years of the century.

And what was it like? The 1900s were, we discovered, very politically incorrect. Producer Steve Humphries had cunningly hired that gruff scally actor Tom Georgeson (Harry in *Between The Lines*) to give a one-of-the-lads tone to the commentary, but it was not enough to disguise the po-faced sanctimony of the script. "In the first half of the century, boys were expected to be boys, to play the game, control their emotions and, above all, to be physically brave", the commentary revealed in what was clearly a tone of disapproval. "From infancy onwards, there was pressure on men to cover up their feelings," it further objected.

Intercut with this pious drivel were interviews in which rheumy old men sat in front of pictures of their grandchildren and dead wives and recalled that their dads and their PE teachers had not encouraged them to cry and that a premium had been put on physical strength. "In any [playground] fight, you were expected to get in there and do your stuff," remembered an old bloke called Harold Smith. But the commentary knew that this was not harmless playground fisticuffs. Oh, no. This was sinister socio-historical-political conditioning. These testosterone monsters were being conditioned "to defend the Empire against the fuzzy-wuzzies or the Hun".



The worst curse of modern academic study, from history to literary biography, is a tendency to find the first half of the century wanting by the moral precepts of the second half. *A Man's World* is one of the worst examples yet of this phenomenon. If boys were encouraged to be physically strong, and aggression and patriotism were prized virtues, it was perhaps because the labour that most of them did was likely to be hard and arduous and they would have to walk there before they could do it and because, statistically, nearly every generation of British men was likely to be called on to fight a war. The sensitive new man is a product of desk jobs and extended peace.

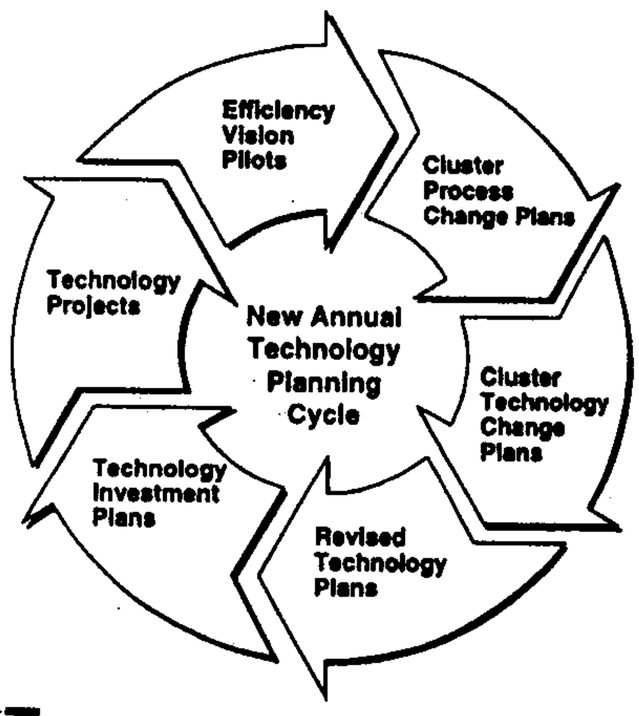
But Humphries and the boys at *A Man's World* don't begin to see this. They think that the modern man is a morally superior model. They think that men ought to cry. Anyway, they are helping, for this series is bad enough to make strong critics weep.

But, while the new men of documentaries try to demonstrate their male feminist credentials, they are, once again, tragically too late. The women in television have moved on to post-feminist backlash films. If a male documentary maker working alone had made *Quality Time*, a brutally condescending film about working mothers for the *Modern Times* slot on BBC2, they would fairly soon be comparing scar tissue with John Wayne Bobbit. But Colin Luke was lucky enough to have the insurance of working alongside Lynn Alleway.

If *A Man's World* was comment posing as history, *Quality Time* was comment posing as observational documentary. The working mothers in the film were portrayed as monsters, the intercutting frequently sardonic rather than chronological. For the second time in hours, Square Eye's square eyes nearly filled with tears. This New Man stuff is catching.

'Square Eyes'

HOW TELEVISION WORKS Pt 94



THIS week's cut out 'n' keep extract from the BBC's 140-page document *Implementing the Efficiency Vision*, the Birtean bible, explains in one easy-to-understand diagram the corporation's "10 year strategy" for achieving a "new technology planning cycle".

It has been chosen as a striking example of the clarity of thought that is inspiring BBC employees to ever greater heights of efficiency.

MEDIA NEWS

CHANNEL 5's search for a press officer has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. It's a vitally important job, which will involve explaining to viewers in one half of Britain why they can't get the service without retuning their video recorders, and viewers in the other half why they can't get it at all. The Channel 5 PR will also need some good answers when complaints start piling up about naff programme quality.

Despite all that, there was no shortage of experienced candidates, including press chiefs from at least two major ITV operations. Curiously, however, they were given the brush-off at an early stage of their negotiation with Channel 5, which is currently being advised by Roy Addison — former head flack at Thames TV, now head of public relations for Pearson, one of the channel's shareholders.

Instead, Addison's eye fell upon the little-known Liz Roberts, who for the past couple of years has been working at BSkyB, with special responsibility for getting the listings right. It's a brave appointment, given that Roberts has never worked in the corporate PR field and that most media hacks have never heard of her.

Still, Addison was clearly impressed — as well he might be, since he employed her as his secretary at Thames, and then promoted her so often that she eventually became number two in his empire. There is another minor detail about Roberts which Addison will of course ignored: she is his wife.

Parsons on
IF YOU'RE A MEMBER OF THAT PRIVILEGED CLOSE KNIT GROUP...
WHO GIVE EACH OTHER JOBS REGARDLESS OF ABILITY...
THEN YOU GET YOUR OWN TV SERIES!
PUB

HYPEWATCH: JULIA CARLING

"IT'S HOW you handle things that really counts," Julia Carling told the *Daily Mail* last year. "In the instant broadcast age, it's not what's really going on that matters, but how you make it look publicly." As a former PR woman herself, she should know.

6 August 1995. The *News of the World* breaks the story of Will Carling's "trysts" with Princess Di.

Hype!

7 August. While Will announces that he is "fed up" with all the publicity, Julia poses winsomely for the photographers outside her house. "If I'd known I would be getting this much attention," she quips, "I would have worn my designer clothes." Oddly enough, she is carrying a bag from the Wallis clothes shop, which she displays full-on to the cameras.

13 August. Julia poses for a fashion spread in *Tatler*, previewed in the *Sunday Mirror*, in which she models the latest collection of clothes from ... Wallis. Meanwhile, the *Mail on Sunday* carries a long and "exclusive" interview with Julia and Will (for which, incidentally, they are paid a handsome fee).

23 August. Julia is hired to present the *Capital Woman* show on Carlton Television. "We were discussing the deal before the Princess Diana story broke," a TV source tells *Today*, "and the way she handled herself then clinched the deal."

25 August. "It's weird that suddenly I'm the one having all the publicity," Julia observes coyly, as the new issue of *Tatler* reaches the shops.

29 August. Wearing a mini-dress and twirling an umbrella, Julia appears at a photo-call to promote her new Carlton show. Asked about the Diana business, she replies: "As far as we're concerned, it's over."

6 September. The tabloids are full of the news that Will has been caught driving to Kensington Palace to deliver a present to Princes William and Harry.

7 September. Julia hits back in another "exclusive" interview, assuring the *Daily Mail* that there are no serious problems in her marriage. What's important to her now, she adds, is her career.

24 September. Princess Diana and Will are photographed, separately, leaving a "sports clinic". Julia is tight-lipped: "I have nothing to say." Well, not yet...

26 September. Julia attends the charity premiere of the film *Funny Bones*, where she is photographed "sharing a joke" with comedian Lee Evans. Afterwards, Evans is bemused. "Who on earth is she?" he asks.

28 September. Smiling as radiantly as ever, Julia appears at a photocall to launch a new face-cream. Later, she goes to a "celebrity party" to mark the first anniversary of VH-1, the satellite channel for which she is a presenter. Meanwhile, the Rugby Union's media liaison officer issues a statement: "Will Carling announced with regret tonight that he and his wife Julia have agreed to spend some time apart ... They want to emphasise that nobody else is involved ... They will issue no further statements."

29 September. Oh yes they will. Julia authorises her father to issue a statement on her behalf: "I had always valued my marriage as the most important and sacred part of my life and it hurts me very much to face losing my husband in a manner which has become outside my control." Her father adds that Julia "will not be speaking to any newspapers or making any statement".

6 October. Julia attends the premiere of *Pocohontas*. (Obviously this cannot be the same Julia Carling who told an interviewer in January 1995 that "I don't thrive on publicity, I don't want to be one of those people always turning up at movie premieres.") She confides to a *Daily Mirror* reporter that her favourite Disney film is *Beauty and the Beast*. But that has nothing to do with her failed marriage to Will, she adds sweetly.

11 October. Princess Di complains to Richard Kay of the *Daily Mail* that Julia is "basking in cheap publicity" and using her marital problems to promote her TV career. Coincidentally, as this news breaks, Julia is filming a new *Capital Woman* show.

Hype!

Dressed in a beige satin shirt and matching waistcoat and skirt, she tells reporters that Diana's accusations are "not worth commenting upon ... I am not even going to waste my time replying." That evening, still shunning the limelight, Julia enjoys a dinner date at Julie's restaurant with Daniel Galvin, a hairdresser. As they say farewell afterwards, she kisses him warmly in front of the assembled paparazzi. "I have not started a relationship with Daniel," she declares.

19 November. On the eve of Princess Diana's *Panorama* interview, Julia appears on Talk Radio UK. She agrees with Press Complaints Commission chairman Lord Wakeham that public figures must expect some loss of privacy: "I am now in the public eye and have to accept the press attention."

3 December. Wearing a "sexy gold dress", Julia arrives at the British Comedy Awards on the arm of Neil Morrissey, the star of *Men Behaving Badly* — thus ensuring a barrage of predictable headlines.

21 December. Julia collects £10,000 in libel damages from the *Daily Mail* for its outrageous suggestion that she set up her dinner date with Daniel Galvin in order to get more publicity. Her lawyer reveals that she is "very distressed" by the allegation that she was "skilfully manipulating the media".

31 December. The Princess of Wales is holidaying on the Caribbean island of Barbuda. By an extraordinary coincidence, Julia is on the neighbouring island of Barbados, where she is photographed in a skimpy red bikini.

7 January 1996. Julia is mystified by a report in the *Sunday Times* alleging that she is negotiating a divorce. "There is absolutely no truth in this at all," a spokesman insists. A spokesman for Will agrees: "No divorce has been talked about so far."

12 January. Lawyers for Will and Julia confirm that they are discussing a divorce settlement.

31 January. The Press Complaints Commission rules that Julia has forfeited her right to privacy by willingly cooperating with the media. Rejecting her complaints about a *Sun* interview with one of her ex-boyfriends, the Commission decides that she has placed her relationships in the public domain "by virtue of articles and interviews designed in part to enhance her own image".

11 March. Hearing that the *Daily Mirror* is about to claim that Will and Diana had an affair, Julia isues a late-night statement through her solicitor: "She is very distressed that intimate details of her and Mr Carling's private life should appear in print in this way. She has never wanted this, and regrets that it has occurred. She has, and will have, no further comment to make."

12 March. Whoops! The April issue of *Tatler* hits the newsstands, embellished with several specially-posed photos of the publicity-shy Julia, plus an "exclusive" interview in which she provides intimate details of her and Mr Carling's private life. She says that the news of his friendship with Diana "came like a bolt from the blue ... I was just getting to grips with my new job in TV ... It was sick-making ... I had just started my new job at *Capital Woman* and I couldn't afford to let them down."

At lunchtime, demurely clad in a black mini-skirt, Julia is once again the focus of attention, collecting an award as "satellite TV personality of the year". "Wow, this has made my day," she gushes, seizing the opportunity to give another plug to VH-1.

Meanwhile, Will's solicitor issues a statement: "Mr Carling believes that the breakdown of his marriage is an entirely private matter. It is my client's intention not to comment further." Alas for good intentions: the new issue of *Radio Times* — published on the same day — includes a two-page interview in which Will talks about his meetings with the Princess.

Hooray!

13 March. The Carlings continue to observe their vow of silence. Announcing that he wants to "put the record straight", Will issues a statement through his solicitor alleging that Julia was the source of the quotes in the *Daily Mirror*. "Nevertheless I received a personal assurance from Mrs Carling's solicitors that she had nothing to do with the story," the lawyer explains. "I passed this assurance on to my client who accepted it."

Julia duly issues a statement through *her* solicitors, saying she is "flabbergasted" by his decision to make a statement which was a "travesty of the truth". Later in the day, Julia appears "relaxed" as she jokes with a TV crew — "while recording her Carlton show *Capital Woman*", as the tabloids helpfully remind us.

WORLD OF LEFT-WING MAGAZINES Part 94

ALTHOUGH Geoffrey Robinson MP, the new owner of the *New Statesman*, has promised to maintain its "editorial independence", not everyone is convinced.

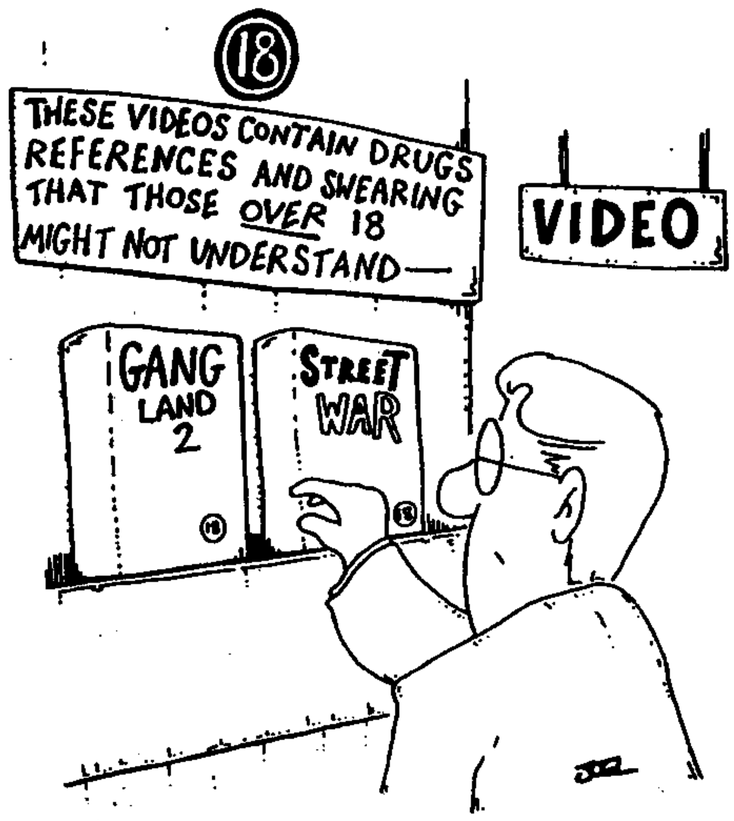
Blair's staff tried to persuade previous owner Philip Jeffrey not to sell the paper. Having recently donated a six-figure sum to equip Labour HQ with a computer set-up called Excalibur, which will provide an "instant response system" to Tory smears, Jeffrey was accepted by the Blairites as "one of us" — unlike Robinson, who is a close crony of Gordon Brown and is therefore treated with suspicion. Blair's press officer, Alastair Campbell, rang an *NS* trustee, Margaret Hodge MP, and urged her to reconsider.

Nevertheless, the sale went through — and Campbell's worst suspicions were confirmed when one of Gordon Brown's staff, Ed Balls, was seen in the *Statesman* office soon afterwards. Terrified that the mag would be turned into a Gordon Brown fanzine, Blair's acolytes set about trying to ensure that a "reliable" editor was installed. Their favoured candidate was Richard Stott, who had employed Alastair Campbell at both the *Daily Mirror* and *Today*.

But Robinson had other ideas. He drew up a shortlist consisting of *NS* deputy editor Paul Anderson, Will Hutton, Francis Wheen, Roy Hattersley and Ian Hargreaves, the recently-sacked editor of the *Indie* — all of whom, apart from Hargreaves, are regarded by Blair as dangerous left-wing troublemakers. Once again, the Blairite lobbying machine went into action, warning Robinson that the appointment of anyone other than Hargreaves would be interpreted as an unfriendly act. Alas, Hargreaves himself seemed lukewarm, saying that he was busy making television programmes and that he couldn't afford to live on the *NS* editor's salary of £35,000.

Lo and behold, last Thursday it was announced that Hargreaves had got the job, for which he will earn rather more than £100,000 a year — no mean feat for a cash-strapped magazine with a circulation of about 20,000. Still, as far as New Labour is concerned, it's a price worth paying — especially as Hargreaves has been given a "minder" in the form of John Lloyd, another Blair crony.

Whether anyone will bother to read the poor old *Staggers* is quite another matter.


18
THESE VIDEOS CONTAIN DRUGS REFERENCES AND SWEARING THAT THOSE OVER 18 MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND—
VIDEO
GANG LAND 2
STREET WAR

DOING THE ROUNDS

HEALTH secretary Stephen Dorrell's response to the intensive care bed crisis — create more high dependency beds (HDBs) to take the load off intensive care — seems a trifle optimistic since he isn't prepared to commit additional resources.

There are currently just 300 HDBs around the country and, at £150,000 per bed each year, they aren't suddenly going to appear — especially since many trusts are deeply in the red towards the end of the financial year.

The problem, as ever, is as much to do with a lack of specialist staff as beds, and Dorrell's assertion that the shortage is largely due to ineffective "management" of existing resources beggars belief.

● THE lack of paediatric intensive care beds as highlighted by the death of Nicholas Geldard is well known (*Eyes passim*), but the penchant for centralising specialist services has also lead to a lack of emergency paediatric cover for many large casualty departments.

In **Liverpool, Fazakerley hospital** and the **Royal Liverpool** both see 85,000 new patients a year in their casualty departments. Many of them are children, but any child emergencies have to be dealt with by doctors who may have no paediatric experience at all.

Intubating and inserting drips in children is an acquired skill, as is being able to differentiate between less serious and life-threatening illness. The local ambulance service does try to take sick kids to **Alder Hey** children's hospital 15 minutes away — unless, rather perversely, the child is so ill it has to be seen immediately in the nearest department. Birmingham's brand new **Selly Oak** casualty also lacks emergency paediatric cover.

● THESE casualty departments are the large ones that the audit commission wants to save — not the two thirds of smaller ones which allegedly aren't worth keeping open. The commission's casualty report found a 16 percent rise in emergency admissions since 1989, despite the government's Health of the Nation drive; and the number looks set to rise further.

Still, it could be argued that cutting the number of casualty departments by two thirds would have a similar affect on the number of casualties. Doubtless they'll be encouraged to pop along to their GP. The commission found no evidence that the Patient's Charter had done anything to improve care. Indeed, the stipulation that a nurse should be tied up out the front to say "hello" to everyone is costing casualty departments £90,000 a year that would far better be spent elsewhere.

● THE audit commission's next port of call is to rubbish GP fundholding. As a draft report puts it: "The purchasing decisions of many fundholders may not be providing the best value for money." A lack of performance monitoring, patchy budget management, lack of effective sanctions against poor performers and the excessive cost for trusts of having to contract with individual practices are all highlighted.

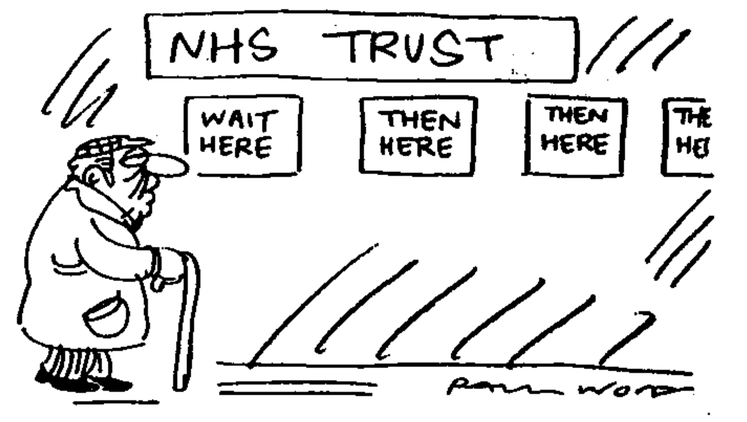
Staff, equipment and computing costs for fundholding cost the taxpayer £232 million for the first five years, not to mention the large savings that fundholders have made on their over-generous prescribing budgets. Sixty percent of these savings have been used to improve practice premises for the benefit of the patients — and also the partners when they retire and sell-on their share of the property.

● **UNIVERSITY College London hospitals'** general manager Sandra Knowles no longer has to worry about how to get home after a late night at the office. She has taken to bedding down in the relative luxury of a side room on ward PPW5 Annex. The room is normally available to private surgical patients for £250 a night, a fee Ms Knowles appears not to be paying. Perhaps she will extend the free accommodation to porters and domestics coming off late night shifts as a sign of goodwill. Or perhaps not.

● ALL is not well at **South East Wales ambulance trust**: three years old, £1 million in debt, its chair, John Curteis, and chief executive, David Triggs, have resigned after pressure from the Welsh office.

A performance review highlighted "the absence of appropriate financial and management information systems and inadequate supervision of trust affairs by the board."

Despite the spiralling debt, loss of a £500,000



contract, crappy vehicles and equipment (the trust even bought secondhand stretchers from the London ambulance service), Mr Triggs and two other executive directors (Ian Coulter and John Henley) managed to award themselves £13,000 in bonuses "for meeting financial targets".

Mr Curteis is typical chair material: a former accountant for Ernst & Young, and a past chairman of Cardiff West Conservatives and high sheriff of South Glamorgan.

● COME on down Julie Sharma, who pocketed £35,000 compensation when she left her job as **Gwent Community Health Trust**'s business development manager. Within days she popped up just down the road in Cwmbran as policy and performance director at **Gwent Health Authority**. Salary: £40,000 — not unadjacent to her old screw; plus bonus and car. She was the only person interviewed for the job.

● ALSO on the move are 29 managers, including chief executive Peter Ward, from **Wakefield's Pinderfields trust** (£2 million in debt); Iris Isbister, who's resigning from **Forth Valley health board** over a conflict of interest with her surgeon husband; Ian Kidson, who's been forced to relinquish his £88,000 chief executive post at **London's Whittington hospital** after "a clash of management styles"; and Mike Marchment, chief executive of **Staffordshire's Premier health trust** (just £1.5 million in the red). More high dependency beds all round. Not.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

SOME weeks ago Douglas "Piggy" Hogg, chief Maffia minister, was railing against former European agriculture commissioner Ray MacSharry. Due to his miscalculations, said "Piggy", the increasingly rich barley barons had received £7.5 million more subsidy than they were entitled to.

Such is the scale of the subsidy bonanza, however — £3 billion was paid to British farmers last year — that £7.5 million is very small beer indeed. It is considerably less than the £900 million paid by the European Union to subsidise Italian farmers to grow 350,000 tonnes of unsalable tobacco, or the estimated £6 billion in EU fraud.

"Piggy's" grab for the headlines thus hardly caused a ripple: the overpaid millions were lost in the billions flowing into the great agricultural maw. But, if the barons don't notice the difference, slaughterhouse owners certainly do. Since April, more than 100 have been refusing to pay ruinously high inspection charges to the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS).

So seriously does the Maffia take this massive shortfall in funds it is rushing to court next month to claim its "blood" money — even though the meat men argue that the charges are illegal. They will be asking the judge to suspend payment until their case is heard in the European court, which may take two or three years. But the Maffia clearly cannot wait this long and is set to tell the judge that, if the money is not paid over, it will have to be found from other sources. Potential losers singled out are the BSE research programme, coastal defence and the hill compensation allowances paid to impoverished Welsh sheep farmers.

Funnily enough the Maffia has disclosed how much it is owed: by October, it says, it will be £7.5 million. Odd how the same amount, overpaid to barley barons, hasn't threatened the mad cow boffins.

WHEN "Piggy" banned mechanically recovered meat (MRM) — more than 80 per cent of which is extracted from beef backbones, where the spinal cord is found — it was because his inspectors couldn't guarantee the absence of spinal cord in the carcases.

This spelt disaster for one firm, Great Harwood Meats in Lancashire, which had invested more than £500,000 in a machine to produce MRM. It lost £250,000 in profits and, faced with laying off eight employees, it offered to pay the MHS for additional inspectors to re-do the job they were already paid to do. But "Piggy" wouldn't play and MRM stays banned.

THOSE fed up with meat could try soya. Thanks to chemical giant Monsanto, which is preparing to import its own brand of soyabeans into Europe, there will be loads of it available.

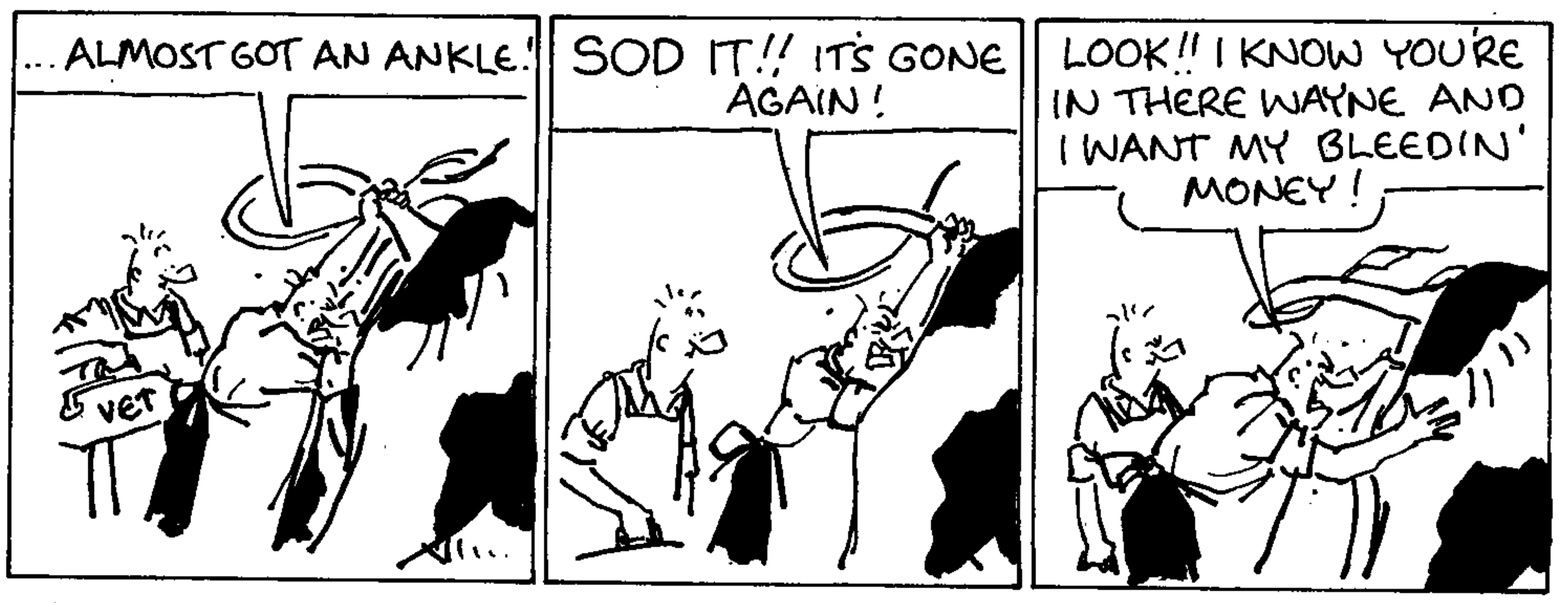
Monsanto beans, however, are beans with a difference: genetically engineered to be resistant to Monsanto's own glyphosate weed killer. By this means, higher doses of the herbicide can be used to kill resistant weeds, coincidentally increasing profits from chemical sales at the same time.

There is a snag: glyphosate is acutely toxic to humans and can cause long-term liver damage, among other things. Mad cows might be a better option.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT



THE Rotten Borough Advertiser

GARBAGE

LEWISHAM's Labour election strategists are worried about links between the private company Serviceteam and the council's own in-house DIRECTeam.

Serviceteam tenders for council refuse contracts and has attracted plenty of council expertise to its board. For example its managing director Mushtaq Malik was director of DIRECTeam and carried on as its head six months *after* he had set up Serviceteam.

Malik then enticed two former assistants to join him: Philip Walker, who now heads the Serviceteam operations and human resources division; and Mike Boult, finance and operations director. Malik also persuaded Coun David Sullivan, chair of the powerful personnel committee, to accept the post of sales and marketing director even though Lewisham council's official policy is to support in-house bids.

Some of Sullivan's Labour comrades were surprised that he had joined a firm which was involved in a takeover of AAH Environmental Services (parent company AAH Holdings), who both have such true blue credentials. AAH Holdings made money in 1984 when its transport subsidiaries helped break the miners' strike by moving coal from working pits. Since 1990 AAH Holdings has confirmed its political allegiance by donating £1,000 annually to the Tory party.

Sullivan says he has reached a gentleman's agreement with Lewisham that Serviceteam will not bid against DIRECTeam as long as it exists. This is fine — but DIRECTeam becomes increasingly threatened as workers leave to join Malik and Sullivan at Serviceteam.

Labour party activists have already called for Sullivan's resignation and point to Serviceteam's record in Wandsworth. The firm is in big trouble there over the borough's refuse contract which was taken on by its predecessors, AAH, for a bid that was £740,000 lower than the nearest competitor and has been losing money ever since. Serviceteam is locked into the deal for another six years and would face prosecution by the council if it reneged.

In a vain attempt to make a profit the company enforced a six-day working week of up to 65 hours. Eight dustmen have been sacked since November, including four permanent workers with 50 years service between them. Serviceteam ran a campaign against their own workers accusing them of vandalism, laziness and intimidation, and claimed that their problems in Wandsworth were the result of "low productivity" and "malpractice" by their workers.

It has settled with its workers via their union, the GMB, but their future in Wandsworth looks as bleak as Sullivan's future at Lewisham council.

RUBBISH

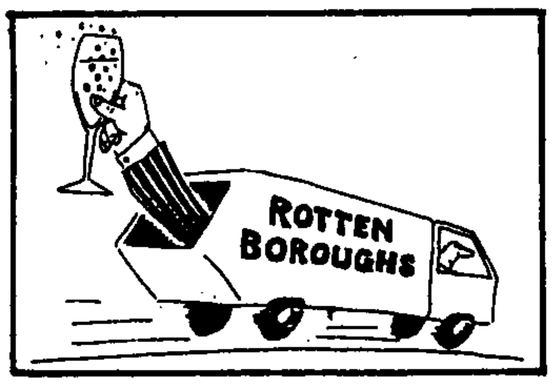
ONYX UK Ltd, the rubbish firm that works for Wandsworth council and was caught dumping commercial waste along with council waste in the borough to save tipping fees, is also working hard in Bent.

Just before the local elections in May 1994 Bent Tories tried to cut voters' council tax bills by £112. This was to be financed by selling off a big depot in Alperton Lane. The council found a buyer: Onyx, which paid £5.3 million for the site — equivalent to a one-off £65 saving per Bent council taxpayer.

Unfortunately the Tories had to complete the sale before the elections and so caved in to Onyx when it made the purchase conditional on being given the borough's trade waste and skip hire services as well. How important was the trade waste element of the deal was made clear at the meeting to complete the sale. The minutes noted: "Onyx were adamant that the matter concerning the trade refuse contract needed to be dealt with prior to completion of the purchase of the site".

Commercial waste collecting had been earning the council an annual profit of £230,000. In their haste to create the pre-election sweetener, though, the Tories did not take this into account. Nor did they make Onyx pay for the council bins and skips it would take over. So Onyx got another good deal and the Tories got their pre-election bribe.

Unfortunately, an internal audit into the sale and its ramifications has now found that Bent is at least half a million pounds down on the deal. The report stated that the trade waste services should have been competitively tendered and that EC rules may have been breached. Any attempt to tender the contract belatedly would be heavily weighted in Onyx's favour as it owns the Alperton depot, which is central to trade waste operations. The sale of the depot has now been referred to the district auditor.



TRASH

HATS off to the French company SITA Clean, which against the odds has won the contract to clean Southwark's streets.

Unkindly, some malcontents hint that the firm's knowledge of how to win local government contracts in France stood it in good stead. Last November, a director of SITA Clean's parent, SITA (GB) Ltd, Jean Jacques Prompsy, escaped jail by the skin of his teeth when he was fined 350,000 French francs and given a suspended sentence for his part in a corruption scandal.

The case centred on allegations that as head of Lyonnaise des Eaux, Prompsy had bribed council officers in Grenoble to win a water contract. He was found guilty of both fraudulently using corporate funds and corruption. The mayor of Grenoble, Alain Carignon, was jailed for three years for accepting bribes from Prompsy's firm.

Fortunately for SITA Clean, Southwark councillors ignored not only Prompsy's past but also advice given by independent consultants Competition Advice, who questioned SITA's suitability for street cleaning. The consultants were dubious about SITA's claim of being able to do a better job than the in-house team with only half the staff.

Southwark's in-house team, Southwark Direct, was not helped in trying to win the contract when its offices were broken into and the computerised data of its bid went missing.

IN BRIEF

LEEDS: The Labour council intends to close one of the city's most famous high schools — Benjamin Gott in Armley — despite opposition from parents, pupils, teachers and the community. The council blames falling numbers and rising maintenance costs, but opponents say the council engineered this by delaying repairs. Why would Leeds want to close a school that could be saved? Certainly not because it is on prime development land overlooking the Kirkstall Valley...

SHEFFIELD: While admitting that turning Sheffield into a 24-hour city might come as a shock, Paul Skelton, council development officer, said people would have to get used to "life on the edge". "There's something about cities which is about living dangerously and you mustn't reduce that completely." Skelton lives dangerously in a nice Victorian house far away from the city centre's 24-hour thrills and "dirty stop-out" culture he and his cronies are creating.

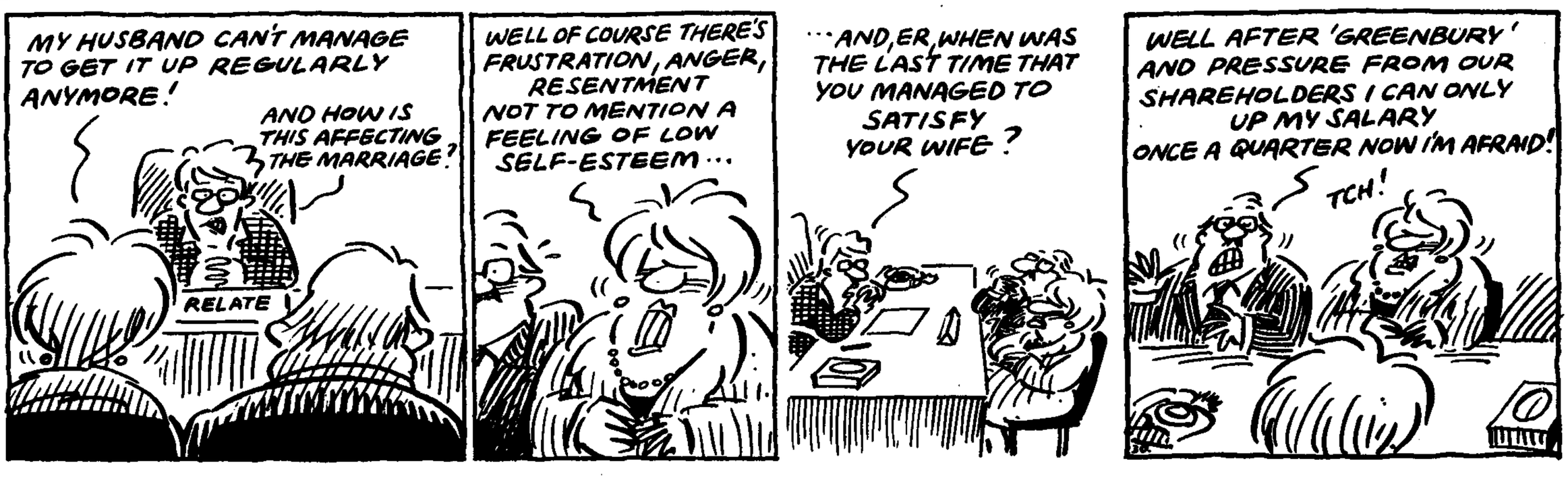
LEWISHAM: Labour is very embarrassed that Claude Gonsalves, housing chair, has been forced to resign after internal auditors found that between 1990-1993 he claimed £5,700 housing benefit from the council that he was not entitled to. Last year he survived controversy surrounding his sister's housing application (Eye 876), but this time Gonsalves — who in 1991-1992 claimed £17,000 in expenses and attendance allowance for carrying out his elected duties — was less lucky. Before being booted out by council Labour leader Jim Mallory Gonsalves fell on his sword. (Three other Labour councillors are having HB claims examined).

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

AFTER a lifetime's selfless graft in local government, six years with Hounslow council working with tenants associations, and being invited by the European Union to witness the South African elections as an international monitor, housing officer Margaret Singh was awarded the CBE last December. How has Hounslow council honoured her? It has made her redundant.

DIRECTORS WIVES

DREDGE


MY HUSBAND CAN'T MANAGE TO GET IT UP REGULARLY ANYMORE!
AND HOW IS THIS AFFECTING THE MARRIAGE?
RELATE
WELL OF COURSE THERE'S FRUSTRATION, ANGER, RESENTMENT NOT TO MENTION A FEELING OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM...
...AND, ER, WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME THAT YOU MANAGED TO SATISFY YOUR WIFE?
WELL AFTER 'GREENBURY' AND PRESSURE FROM OUR SHAREHOLDERS I CAN ONLY UP MY SALARY ONCE A QUARTER NOW I'M AFRAID!
TCH!

Letters

Powers of darkness

Sir,

It may well be true (EYE 893) that BBC news and current affairs chiefs were anxious to placate irate Tories over the effusive treatment afforded to Peter Mandelson's profound polemic by ON THE RECORD. *It is even conceivable that* ON THE RECORD *editor David Jordan was about "to bollock" erring reporter and Labour aspirant Simon Buckby. But of rather more consequence to your readers might have been a brief account of how David Jordan's career has paralleled that of his old and close friend Peter Mandelson since they met as bright young TUC apparatchiks a dozen or so years ago — and how this month's velvet touch by the BBC may not have all been down to Buckby.*

Eschewing professional trade unionism, Jordan and Mandelson started new careers under John Birt at London Weekend Television. Jordan moved with the tax specialist to the Beeb and rose under his patronage, as did Mandelson at the Labour party under Neil Kinnock. The careers of both Jordan and Mandelson were well served by the relationship: Jordan received the inside Labour info from Mandelson; and the Prince of Darkness's reputation was enhanced by his influence over BBC political output through Jordan.

Is it so surprising that Jordan's programme heavily promoted the Mandelson modernism? Or, for that matter, that Jordan should be seen to blame the hapless Buckby?

JIM JEGER,
London NW2.

Hotel reservations

Sir,

Re: Piloti's idea (EYE 892) of spending money on the removal of hideous and harmful buildings from prime sites. Might not this idea be applicable to other forms of eyesore, eg some of the more sour and fussy opinion columns in overcrowded centres of satire?

The Brighton hotel referred to is not an outstandingly ugly or ill-fitting building; there are many places in the town centre where a space could more usefully be opened up.

Piloti obviously gets around... seven cities mentioned in one column alone. The trouble with trying to be everywhere is it takes time; you can get out of touch. The lightly damned hotel has undergone **two** *name changes since it opened several years ago as the Ramada.*

Yours faithfully,
R. EDWARDS,
Brighton.

Piss P-oresome

Sir,

Uranium etc. Peace! Peace! Peace! Write in haste, re-write at leisure.

1 In my letter "U-234" was a typographical error (mine) for "U-235". The composition of natural uranium is no secret, it can be looked up in any reference book.

2 After overrunning Belgium, the Germans discovered 3,000 tonnes of uranium ore "yellow-cake" — not the refined product — stockpiled in various ports.

3 I was wrong about uranium being the "sole" weapons material for armour piercing (AP) projectiles for the Wehrmacht. (Obviously there were others, notably using the "Monroe Effect" of "hollow-charge" explosives.) Early in 1942

Sincerely,
I.D. METCALFE,
Bristol.

(Apologies: The rest of this letter is too dull to print but thanks to all the hundreds of correspondents for proving that the* EYE *is still the nation's premier scientific journal. Ed.)

Comic relief

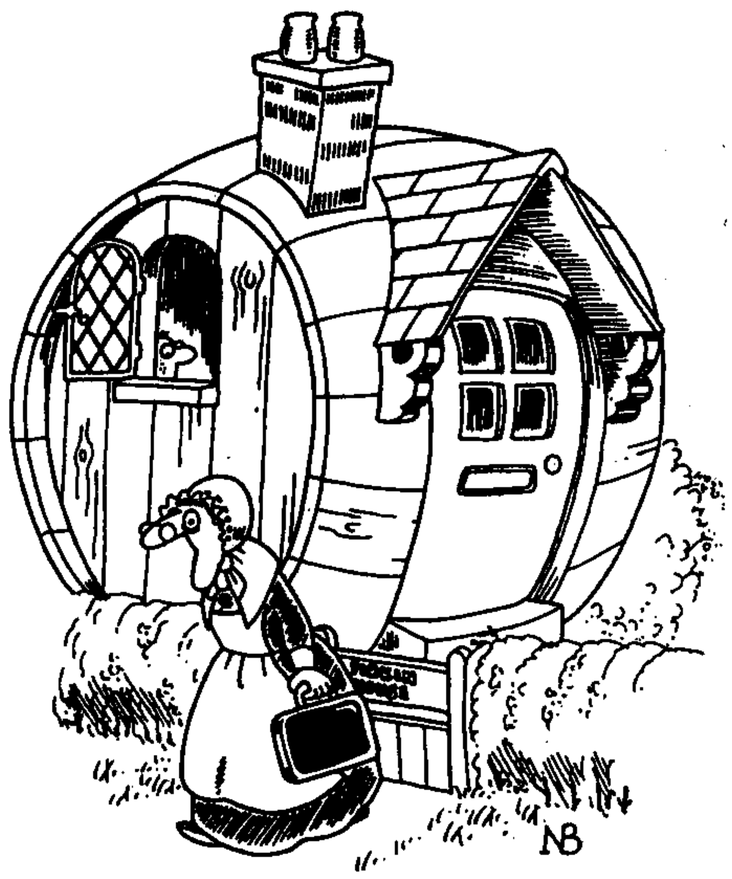
Sir,

I am the chairman of S.P.O.J.L.A.C.F., the Society For the Protection of Old Jokes Long After They Have Ceased To Be Funny. I believe your organ is running a "Photo" joke which requires our attention.

This depicts the sad spectacle of an old gentleman in a vest and cap with a beautiful young girl. The humiliation of said sad old gent must now be complete and therefore our society believes this joke is in need of our protection and would like to request its inclusion in your next issue. To this end, I enclose a petition of over two names (if you include my dog).

Yours,
WILLIAM PARKER,
President of S.P.O.J.L.A.C.F.

Pre-School Nursery Facility Rhymes



There was an old woman who lived
in a firkin.
She had just the one child and
carried on workin'.

Loan sharks

Sir,

I do not doubt the existence of librarians who instil in their readers the suspicion that Loitering With Intent To Borrow A Book is a criminal offence. But as a real, trained librarian I feel I must protest at Piloti's assertion that "most modern, trained librarians hate books even more than they hate readers".

Readers are our raison d'être — our first consideration and our last. Personal experience in the public and academic sectors of the profession has taught me that library users seeking information nowadays tend to consider availability far more important than format: it doesn't matter if the fact is in a book, on a screen or on the back of a chewing-gum wrapper, as long as they have it and can use it.

In a world where published information is increasing in quality hourly, the demons of lack of space and funding have decreed that new ways must be found to squeeze maximum information into minimum space, and to preserve at least the intellectual content of delicate media such as newsprint. Necessity, not bloody-mindedness, is the reason microfilm and information technology have gained such a hold in Britain's libraries.

I too mourn the passing of the "great and noble spaces"; but it is the books, the information, the **service**, *which constitute a library, not the roof over it or the walls around it.*

Yours bibliophilically,
A.C. WRIGHT,
(Librarian and proud of it)
Harrow, Middlesex.

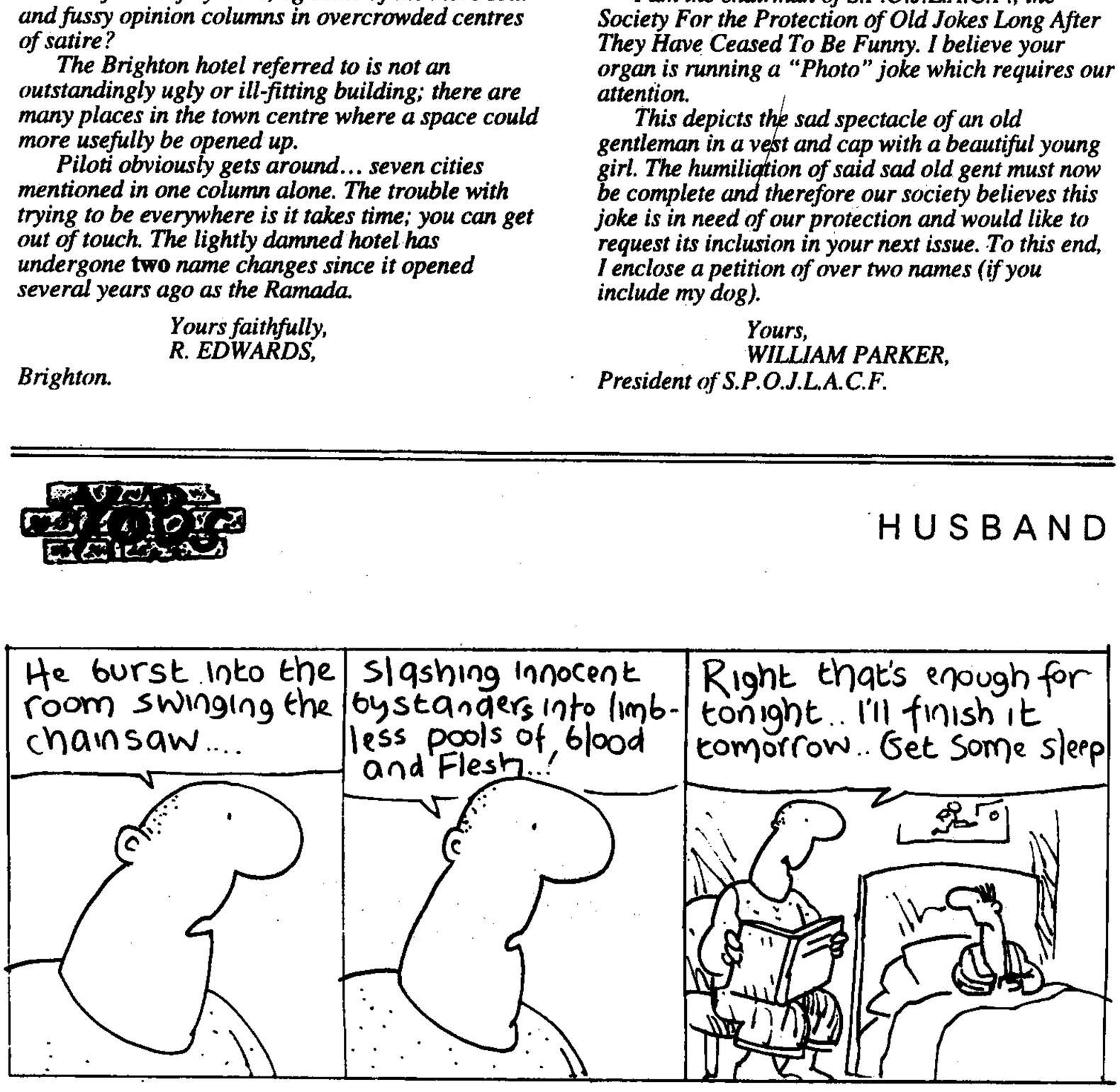
Slightly abnorman

Sir,

I am writing to you in connection with your diary of John Major. I like the article, it is very amusing but I do not appreciate your calling Major's wife "Norman". This makes it sound as if he, Major, is married to a queer — which is not the case. Calling her "Norma" would not detract one iota from the article.

By the way, I feel that Major is the best prime minister Britain has had since Margaret Thatcher (and I'm not British born).

Yours faithfully,
J.C.Q. COAKER,
Benmore, South Africa.


He burst into the room swinging the chainsaw....
slashing innocent bystanders into limb-less pools of blood and Flesh..!
Right that's enough for tonight.. I'll finish it tomorrow.. Get some sleep
HUSBAND

I-SPY

Submitted by Fiona Graham and Liz Davies. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Bali

Rajasthan

Healthy attitudes

Sir,

Re: Westminster council, Rotten Boroughs, EYE *893. Thousands of buildings across the country contain asbestos. Self evidently wherever asbestos is discovered there is a "potential" health risk. However this is not the same as an "immediate danger to health". Potential problems are identified so they can be monitored and prevented from becoming a hazard. Hermes and Chantry Points were monitored by environmental health officers over the 1980s. Weekly air checks did not indicate a need to decant the blocks.*

Your correspondents Labour councillor Jill Sellbourne and Jonathan Rosenberg, husband of Labour councillor Jackie Rosenberg, quote exclusively from 1983 reports but fail to mention that the Labour-run GLC discovered, and was responsible for, the asbestos problem at Hermes and Chantry Points at that time. Nor do they quote from the September 1983 report (enclosed) to the housing committee which states that environmental health have carried out air monitoring and "none of the readings were above 1/10th of the hygiene standard used by the department — or other dwellings". In other words there was not a need to decant the blocks.

The Labour group, who were aware of all the 1983 reports, petitioned the council in 1985, demanding that residents remain in Hermes and Chantry Points. I cannot believe they would have done so if they had believed that there was any immediate danger to residents' health. Nor can I believe that Jonathan Rosenberg's colleague, Stan Bruno, then chairman of the tenants' group, would consistently have refused to move from his flat if he felt there was an immediate threat to his health.

Your correspondents also claim that residents were given "none of this information". Again this does not stand up to scrutiny: paragraph three of the same September 1983 report deals at some length with "tenant consultation". In addition, the council sent newsletters to residents in August and December 1983 (and over the next seven years) to keep them up to date on the situation.

Yours sincerely,
COUN. EDMUND LAZARUS,
Chairman of the Housing Committee, Westminster City Council.

Wet dream

Sir,

I don't know what pisses me off more. All the thirtysomething women earning a regular columnist fee for regaling us with their bland private lives, or the fact that no editor has yet found my domestic arrangements interesting enough to print.

Now I've spotted another opportunity to earn money for nothing — the chance to rewrite the highlights from someone else's homely naval-gazings (Hackwatch, EYE *892). Gizzajob?*

Yours faithfully,
CHARLOTTE BORGER,
London W6.

Practical advice

Sir,

Either Square Eyes has never taken the trouble to watch the programmes reviewed in your organ or he/she requires a geography lesson. The lamentable PEAK PRACTICE *is not set in the Lake District as claimed, but as the title would cunningly suggest in the er — Peak District! Whately and Burton could hardly therefore have engaged in (allegedly) Cumbrian discussions — rather Derbyshire discussions.*

Yours etc,
E. MILES,
Via Compuserve.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"For all the money in China, you think Francis is going to get that ball."
RON ATKINSON, ITV
(M.E. Barnfield)

"Ruud Gullit was able to impose his multi-lingual skills on this match."
JOHN MOTSON, BBC1
(Alick Whitfield)

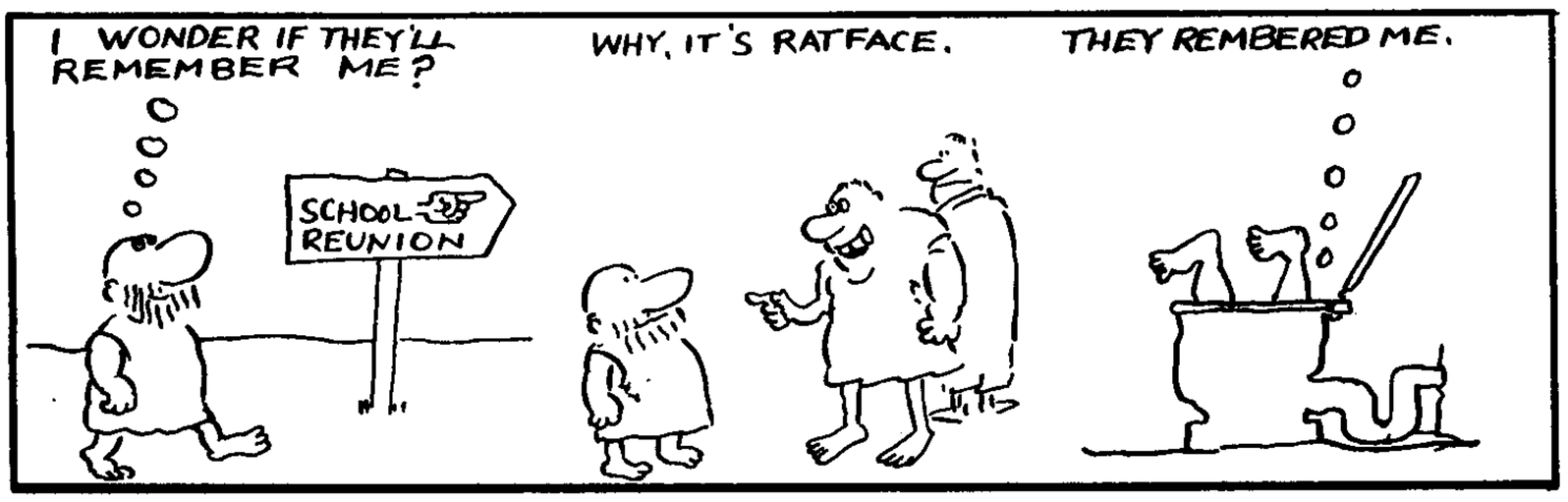
"You can tell by his body language that his head's on the floor."
RAY WILKINS, Channel 4
(Peter Keighron)

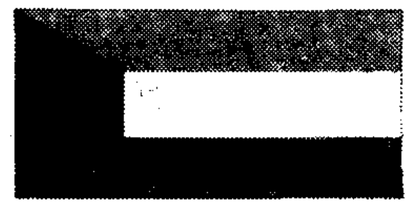
"Talking of cherries, this one was a real peach..."
GARY O'REILLY, Sky Sport
(Dr Peter Coles)

Ray Stubbs: *You've been a lifelong supporter of Sheffield United...*
Sean Bean: *Yes.*
Stubbs: *So, how long have you been supporting them?*
Bean: *Er... all my life.*
BBC1
(Laurence Taylor)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN





Letter from
Kuwait

from Our Own Correspondent

THE danger of any Gulf state trying to make a political issue out of human rights should have been obvious to even the thickest member of our government here. But it wasn't.

In using an international conference in London to draw attention to the continuing detention of more than 600 Kuwaitis by the Iraqis, the ruling al-Sabah family was hoist by its own petard.

Stories of torture, mass ethnic cleansing of up to 150,000 "stateless people" who claim Kuwaiti citizenship and protests by women demanding the vote in Kuwait, must have made uncomfortable reading for the posse of our sheiks who roughed it at the Dorchester last week. The chorus of complaint will have nudged them into checking their offshore bank accounts while reminding them how friendly an overseas bolthole is London.

And with good reason: five years after liberation the back-to-the-future sense in Kuwait is palpable. The same people who ignored repeated warnings about Iraqi intentions in 1990 are back in charge under the same terms and conditions: absolute power and no criticism, lock up anyone who disagrees and buy off the rest.

The looming political-economic crisis first obscured by the invasion and then by the reconstruction of Kuwait plc is now sharply back in focus. It's not a pretty sight. The 20 percent commissions on defence contracts are more lucrative than ever; the burden of the massive private debts the state picked up after liberation grows ever heavier, while corruption, spurred by a sense that the good times really are now over, is soaring.

The problem is simple. The cake created by the country's huge oil wealth is getting smaller, while the massive financial incentives to procreate (and there's little else to do) mean the number who share it is getting bigger. Real change to tackle a soaring budget deficit — the product of a system that offers overpaid government "jobs" to all Kuwaitis and charges nothing for essential services — will erode the ruling al-Sabahs' shaky political support further. Real change is therefore vetoed.

The emir, Sheik Jaber, and his heir presumptive, the crown prince, Sheik Sa'ad, are gradually learning that the political market is like any other: even billions of US dollars don't buy what they used to. As the infidels pay less and less for their oil, the ruling family sees itself paying more and more for the privilege of continuing to pump it.

It is a sign of the times that the ruling elite is even preparing to throw one of the family to the wolves. A former oil and finance minister (from the comfort of a Sheraton in Saudi Arabia during the occupation), drew the short-straw last year when the accusations against him became too much for even the al-Sabahs to ignore.

A nice little earner was alleged by critics during the 1987 tanker war in the Gulf — leasing privately-rented ships to the state at grossly inflated prices. This was tolerable, but more direct accusations of funds disappearing through share-dealing, price support operations and third-party accounts in the Kuwait Investment Office, still "missing" about US$4.5 billion on trading through its Spanish holding company Grupo Torres, were less easy to ignore. With the opposition-dominated legislative assembly demanding blood, the family manoeuvred a quick fix through the still-pliant judiciary.

The scapegoat sheik will now be tried by a special court composed of his peers, members of the council of ministers, where — *hamdulallah* (thank God) — there's no risk of a conviction and no chance of detailed evidence leaking out. Just as well. One appalling opposition interpretation of what happened is that from about September 1990 the erring sheik simply followed the family line in assuming Kuwait would never be liberated and had taken what all considered "appropriate action".

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "He seemed normal enough when he first arrived at the police station," a spokesman for the Montpelier gendarmerie told reporters. "He said he'd come to report the loss of a vehicle, that it was black, and that he'd mislaid the registration number. We took down the details, but started having doubts when he added that the missing vehicle had originally landed on earth 350 years ago."

The spokesman explained that the man, who had identified himself only as King Stephane Xerxes, claimed to be an extra-terrestrial from the planet Draxor, to have landed on earth in the early seventeenth century, and to have been a close friend of the composer J.S. Bach. "He said that he now had to return to his planet urgently because he'd heard that his mother was unwell, and he also had several books from Draxor public library that were overdue, and he was worried about the fine. That was why he had to find his spacecraft. Public transport is appallingly slow, he told us, whereas the craft can apparently get him to Draxor in two days. He even showed us a small piece of metal, which he said was the ignition key. We gave it to our forensic lab, who later identified it as the ring pull from a can of Coca-Cola.

"When we asked him how come he only looked about twenty-five, he went quiet for a bit. Then he told us that was because he used to sleep in his spacecraft every night, and that its rejuvenating rays kept him young. He thought that thieves had stolen his craft while he was on holiday in Antwerp last week. He's been here for three days now, and believe me, we're so sick of him that we're starting to hope that we *will* find his craft, just to get him off the planet." *(New Straits Times [Kuala Lumpur], 27/1/96. Spotter — Philip Cordery)*

—●—

● "As of today, the ministry decrees that all sales of alcohol-free beer are to be banned. This is because non-alcoholic beer, which is made from unfermented barley water, can easily be transformed into an alcoholic drink. All you have to do to turn it into liquor is to add some alcohol to it. Non-alcoholic beer is unnecessary to society and will therefore be withdrawn from sale. The Religious Affairs Ministry, Kuwait." *(Gulf News, 29/1/95. Spotter — Anon)*

—●—

● *"This is a typical example of media hysteria," Mayor Paretskaya of Kemerovo told a packed council meeting. "Cannibalism is nothing new in Siberia, but just because we've had a few more cases recently, newspapers are trying to make out we suddenly have a major outbreak."*

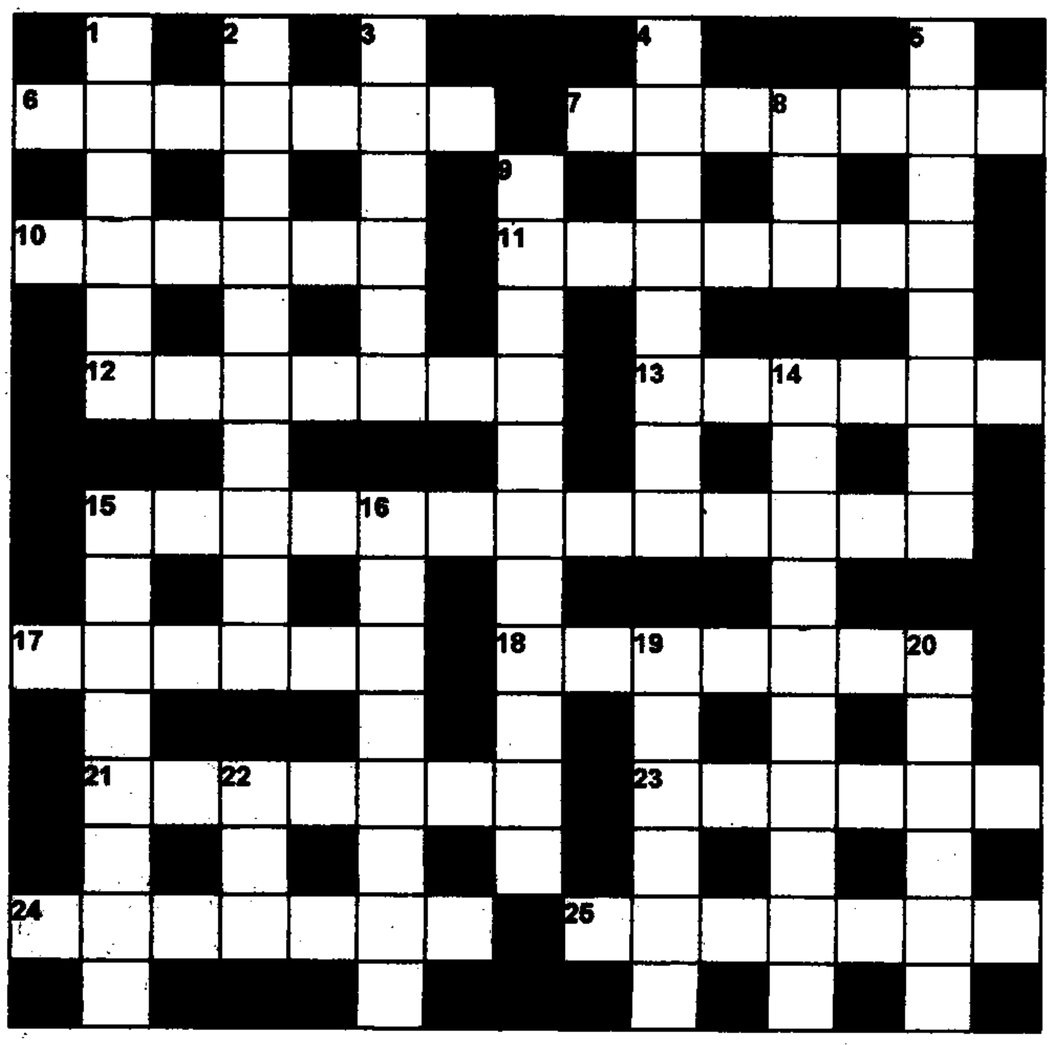
The mayor was responding to press concern about a growing wave of cannibalism in the city. "It's the case of Nikolai Ryabov which has caused all this. Yes, Ryabov killed a local criminal, Vladimir Laptin. Yes, he made ravioli, goulash, pies, and pate out of him. And yes, he and two friends ate the dishes during a prolonged drinking session. And yes, some pies were sold to the railway cafeteria and, true, some were consumed by members of the public. But there have been no complaints, and what remained of Laptin has been cremated. Ryabov is now in custody, so my main concern is that nothing untoward happens at the prison. Regrettably it's still not uncommon for two prisoners to kill and eat their cell mate. Boredom, hunger, and long hours locked up in their cells are usually to blame. But it happens much less often nowadays than it used to, so let's keep a sense of proportion." (OMRI Daily Digest, 8/2/96. Spotter — Angus Murray)

COMPILED BY

Victor Lewis-Smith

EYE CROSSWORD 49 by Cyclops

£100 Winner KEVIN WARD



ACROSS

6/15a Hurley's about to have second joint — fashion embraces awful shit, in the words of doubting Ed. (7,5,8)
7 Redwood (so called) gets off hugging celebrity (7)
10 Tabloid determined to be the end of our enlightenment? (6)
11 No celeb, just some punk now normalised (7)
12 With dosh liberally thrown around sun god's back right now in Egyptian hands (7)
13 One desecrated Koran — not a popular habit! (6)
15 (see 6)
17 Nudes cavorting on piano, arses in the air (4,2)
18 Rod has craft for an aggressive sort of diplomacy (7)
21 Leader's drunken style accepted? (7)
23 Boss's right off big boobs (6)
24 (see 8)
25 Tough getting erection at bed-time — not one to score quickly! (7)

DOWN

1 Singer's hour collared by American arse (6)
2 Cannabis and pokes sums up local rank and file party supporters (5,5)
3 Mark Thatcher's first love, getting pissed (6)
4 Withdraw whip in retaliation (8)
5 Political scandal: Reagan's bursting with it (8)
8/24 Crude digital expression of alcoholic measures? (3,7)
9 Splashing out when conducting a dirty political campaign? (11)
14 Clinton to be seen here, giving ground to the bureau? (4,6)
15 Callaghan's radiant attending Di's regular haunt, we hear (5,3)
16 Following bungled sex op, pop singer gets unwelcome publicity (8)
19 Pisspoor sentimental tripe constrained by acquiescent gesture (2,4)
20 Alliance gets a nice surprise "Yes" (6)
22 Member's bit of a trip (3)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 29.03.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 48

ACROSS: 7 Square Eyes 9 Iowa 10 Dick 11 Bollocking 12 Tyrant 14 Pot-belly 16 Funding 18 Firearm 20 Disrobes 21 Tattoo 23 Incubation 26 Rear 27 Used 28 Re-election.

DOWN: 1 Equity 2 Backhander 3 Beeb 4 Cyclops 5 Nick 6 Swindler 8 Shortlist 13 Tony Blair 15 Electorate 17 Unionist 19 Assizes 22 Orator 24 Undo 25 Noel.

NOT LIBEL NEWS

On 21st April 1995 Private Eye published the following parody:

ATTROCIOUS TACKY

(The World's 2nd Worst Columnist)

Streisand Makes Me Sick

BARBRA Streisand makes me sick. She can't sing and she makes me sick. She couldn't even play tennis for Greece, like I did. I met her once in 1970 in Sniffer's Club on 78th and 94th in the Big Bagel. She was surrounded by a lot of creeps like Rad Zaldeberg, Morty Schwarzlutz, and Marion Pimms, ex-wife of perfume tycoon Milmot Pimms. *(Who are these people? Ed.)*

And you know what the non-tennis-playing Jewish Princess said to the poor little Greek boy? No?

"No thank you, Mr Taki, I do not do cocaine, but I'm sure you will find a buyer amongst your rather disgusting friends."

What a loser. No wonder she makes me sick! She never even played judo for Greece. Get a life. Barbra!

On 7th March 1996 we received the following letter:

Sir,

We have been instructed by our client, Mr Taki Theodoracopulos whose attention has been drawn to an allegation contained in the edition of PRIVATE EYE for 21 April 1995 under the "Attrocious Tacky" column, headed "Striesand *[sic]* Makes Me Sick".

This article deliberately and clearly infers *[sic]* that our client was or is a dealer in cocaine.

This allegation is totally untrue and calculated seriously to damage our client's reputation. Our client has never been involved in dealing in drugs, which you should be aware is a very serious criminal offence.

Our client generally treats your "Attrocious Tacky" column with humorous contempt. However he rightly feels strongly that such a serious allegation oversteps the boundaries of good humour, and constitutes a serious libel.

The discovery of this attack upon him, which apparently has gained circulation in the press, has caused our client much annoyance and distress. The purpose of this letter is to request your undertaking forthwith that you will not publish any further articles containing this or any similar allegation and to invite you to agree to reimburse our client for his legal costs incurred in this matter.

In the absence of your agreement to these proposals within seven days we are instructed to commence proceedings. As to whether or not our client will press a claim for substantial damages would depend upon your response to this letter.

Yours faithfully,
PETER CARTER-RUCK & PARTNERS,
London EC4.

● We would of course like to apologise to Mr Theodoracopulos for any suggestion in this piece that he is or was a cocaine-dealer. In 1984 Mr Theodoracopulos was caught attempting to smuggle 23 grammes of cocaine through customs at Heathrow Airport. He was sentenced to four months in prison for possession of cocaine and served his sentence in Pentonville. It is therefore an appalling slur on the reputation of this convicted criminal to suggest that he was a coke-dealer rather than a coke-smuggler and coke-head.

As to the question of damages or costs, Mr Carter-Ruck is advised that *Private Eye*'s response to his millionaire client is identical to that in the celebrated case of *Arkell vs. Pressdram 1971.*

LATE NEWS

GUN CLUBS SPEAK OUT

by **E.I. Saddio,** Our Man At The Gun Club With The Flak Jacket And The Rambo Complex

A SPOKESMAN for Britain's gun clubs hit out last night at calls for tighter regulations on the owners of hand-guns.

"Sure they are dangerous and potentially lethal, but you could say the same about the guns."

He continued: "It would be impossible to ban these guns because the owners would view such legislation as an infringement of their liberty. They would, of course, defend themselves. And they've got guns. At home. And they know how to use them. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

IN THE RING TYSON 'SHE WAS ASKING FOR IT'

by Our Legal Staff **Peter-Carter-Duckin'-and-Divin'-Harry**

THE WORLD Heavyweight champion, Mr. Michael Tyson, last night stood accused of a brutal assault on a "big girl from Wandsworth, England".

Frankie Bruno, 34, had come to Las Vegas with a group of fans for "a good night out on the town" and instead had been subjected to a humiliating ordeal of "lying on the floor and being punched on the head".

A defiant Tyson however said "She was asking for it. I met Frankie earlier in the day and she gave me one of those 'I-Go-All-The-Way' looks. Even when we got in the ring she was all over me and kept holding onto me."

No means Bruno

Concluded the World Champion and ex-jailbird: "I have done nothing wrong. I had Frankie's full consent. I am not going to prison again."

Harry Carpenter is 98.

EVENING STANDARDSAREFALLING

Founder of Television Comedy to quit

by Our TV Staff
Harry Thompson *(Who he? Ed.)*

HARRY THOMPSON, 47, last night told the newspapers that he was leaving the world of comedy programmes for ever.

The man entirely responsible for such shows as Hancock's Half Hour, ITMA, The Goons, Much Binding in the Marsh, The Marx Brothers, Cheers, Roseanne, Blackadder, Sergeant Bilko, Mr Bean, Monty Python, Not the Nine O'Clock News and Newman and Baddiel told us: "It is a tragedy and the world of comedy will never be the same again. I am a huge loss to laughter. I don't know how anyone will cope now that I am gone. Do you want a big picture of me to go with this?"

On other pages: The stars pay tribute to the man they called "Toppo"...

AITKEN

A NEW film by Oliver "Norman" Stone starring SIR ANTHONY HOPKINS as Jonathan Aitken, the power crazed politician brought down by his involvement in Watergate *(shurely 'Irangate'? Ed).* Cameo performances by Omar Shariff as Mohammed Al-Fayed and Robbie Coltrane as editor elect of Punch Magazine, Peter McLie.

"A grotesque distortion of a leading world statesman."
The late RICHARD NIXON.

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

I stayed up all night to watch the World Cup cricket on our new Sky dish which was kindly provided by Mrs Thatcher's friend Mr Murdoch as a peace offering for the fact that his newspapers all support Mr Blair. England was playing the Pitcairn Islands, I think. This was the score:

England 27 (Christian F. 6-7, Christian-Umbrellawallah 2-3, the Rev. Christian-Soldiaz 2-1). Pitcairn Island 506-2 in 50 overs (Christian F. 166, Christian-Umbrellawallah 212, the Rev. Christian-Soldiaz 112*).

This was in no small measure a creditable performance by the Pitcairners, especially as there are only 3 people on their island who play cricket. Of course, the tabloid press, such as the *Daily Telegraph*, are saying that England is in a mess and that our

captain should resign at once and give way to Mr Clarke or Mr Heseltine. What rubbish! The only person who could possibly lead England is my friend Chris Patten, and only then after I have retired, by which time he will be 85, which in my view disqualifies him from playing cricket at any level. I'm afraid, after staying up so late, I am rather tired and will have to go to bed now.

Tuesday

Sir James Goldsmith, who is incredibly rich and a friend of Mrs Thatcher, says we must have a referendum on the Euro. Otherwise he will put up candidates in every constituency. I want everyone to know that I am not afraid of him. Oh no. I will not be told what to do by any rich businessman. "What about Mr Heseltine?" asked my wife Norman. "He will not be told what to do either," I said. Today I spelled out my total opposition to a referendum in the following no-nonsense words: "I am not ruling out a referendum. But I would not rule it in either. I have made our position absolutely clear. The decision as to whether we rule in or rule out or neither will be taken at a time that has yet to be ruled in or ruled out." When I told this to Mr Clarke he was not inconsiderably annoyed. He told me: "If you decide on a referendum, I will resign at once." I managed to calm him down by saying that there was no question of having a referendum, unless we decide to have one. This seemed to satisfy him.

Wednesday

I see in the newspapers that I am going to have a reshuffle in July, and that Sir Patrick Mayhew is going to be rewarded for all his work on the peace process by being sacked. Sir Patrick rang me at once to ask whether this was true. I told him I had no idea and that he should talk to Mr Dr Morewhinney because he is in charge of all the press releases. Sir Patrick demanded to know whether I was going to have a reshuffle or not. "I have made my position on this absolutely clear," I told him. "I have not ruled it out and I have not ruled it in. I shall decide on the ruling in or ruling out when..." Mr Mayhew must have dropped the phone at this point because it went dead.

Thursday

I am in a place called Egypt. It is very hot and there is a great deal of sand but otherwise I am not sure why we have come. Mr Clinton is here as well, also Mr Bruton from Ireland. I asked him what we were doing here: "We are having our photograph taken," he explained. Mr Clinton then made a speech to all the American journalists saying "Mah fellow Americans, vote for me. As you can see, I am a world statesman." We all clapped and then one of Mr Clinton's aides handed him a piece of paper. "Oh, yes," he said, "we are all united in the fight against terrorism." I asked him why, in that case, he had given a visa to Mr Gerry Adams, but unfortunately Mr Clinton did not hear. In the photograph I was put next to Sheikh N'Vaq who is the Deputy Foreign Minister of the United Arab Sultanate of the South Gulf States. He told me he was a great friend of Mr Aitken and had stayed at his health farm in a place called Berkshire. "Very good jig-jig-jig," he said with a wink, which I took to be a reference to the bicycle machines they have in those places.

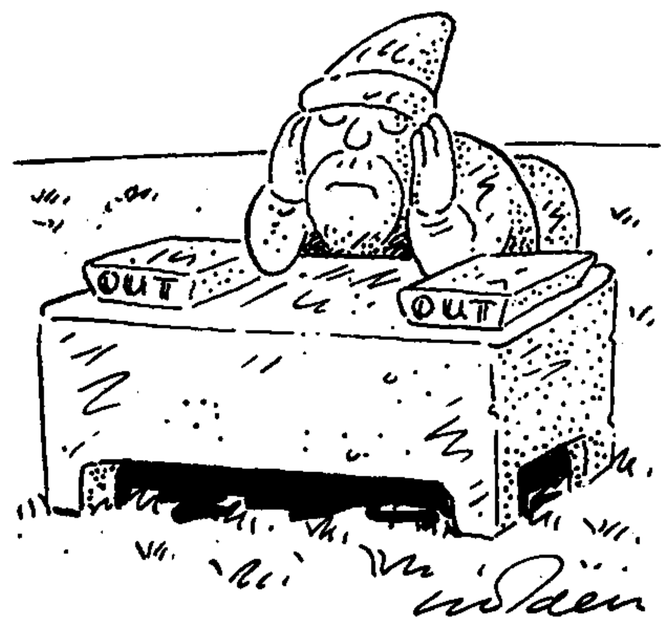
Friday

Back home to find the European Court has made a not inconsiderably silly ruling that British people must work 48 hours a week. As I pointed out to the Cabinet, the latest figures show that over two million Britons now work *no* hours a week at all! How then, I asked, can they obey this ludicrous order from Brussels? The Cabinet all looked very embarrassed, especially Mr Clarke who said: "Sometimes I give up, John."

This is true. He does give up, but then I persuade him to stay on again. That is the real skill of being Prime Minister.

Saturday

Even my patience is at last beginning to wear out with the newspapers. They have printed another of those ridiculous polls showing that Mr Blair is 68 points ahead, and that only 1 per cent of the electorate think that I am not "fairly/utterly useless". There is obviously not a shred of evidence for these absurd figures, since we won hands down over the Scott Report and everyone still remembers how silly Mr



Blair was made to look when Mrs Harman did whatever it was she did. Anyway we are definitely going to win the next election thanks to my brilliant new initiative to help small businesses. Today Mr Morewhinney has written an article by me in the *Daily Mail* saying that I understand the problems of small businessmen, because my father went bankrupt in 1958 through making garden ornaments and I want everyone else to have the same chance. My brother Terry rang up on his mobile from the gates to Downing Street. "What are these ornaments you keep on going on about, John?" he said. "Why can't you call a gnome a gnome? And, anyway, we know why Dad went bankrupt, don't we? Because of that batch you made that went to Bleasdale's with the wrong coloured hats." As usual, Terry had got it completely wrong. "It was not Bleasdale's but Prendergast's," I told him, "and there was nothing wrong with the hats at all. If anything was wrong it was the fishing rods, which were your department, and which due to defective packing broke off in transit." I have now drawn a line under the garden ornament issue once and for all, oh yes.

TIMES PAST — THE TIMES — FUTURE

PUBLIC SERVICE AT ITS FINEST

The decision by Mr Matthew Bannister, the Controller of the BBC's Radio 1 device, to deny "airtime" to the latest recording by the Beatles is to be commended.

If a public service broadcasting organisation, supported by licence fees, is to justify its remit, it cannot afford to dwell on the great classical masterworks of the past, by such giants as Sir Clifford Richard, Sir Michael Jagger and Lord Manfred of Mann.

Nor can its proper role be defined solely in terms of promulgating the oeuvres of the most highly regarded artists of the present day. One thinks here immediately of the Blur, the Oasis and the Pulp.

Yet it must surely be Mr Bannister's prime responsibility to identify the performers who are destined to be at the cutting edge of tomorrow's popular music, for the benefit not only of listeners on these shores, but of the millions of young people all over the world who still look to this country for a lead in the field of rock-based musical entertainment.

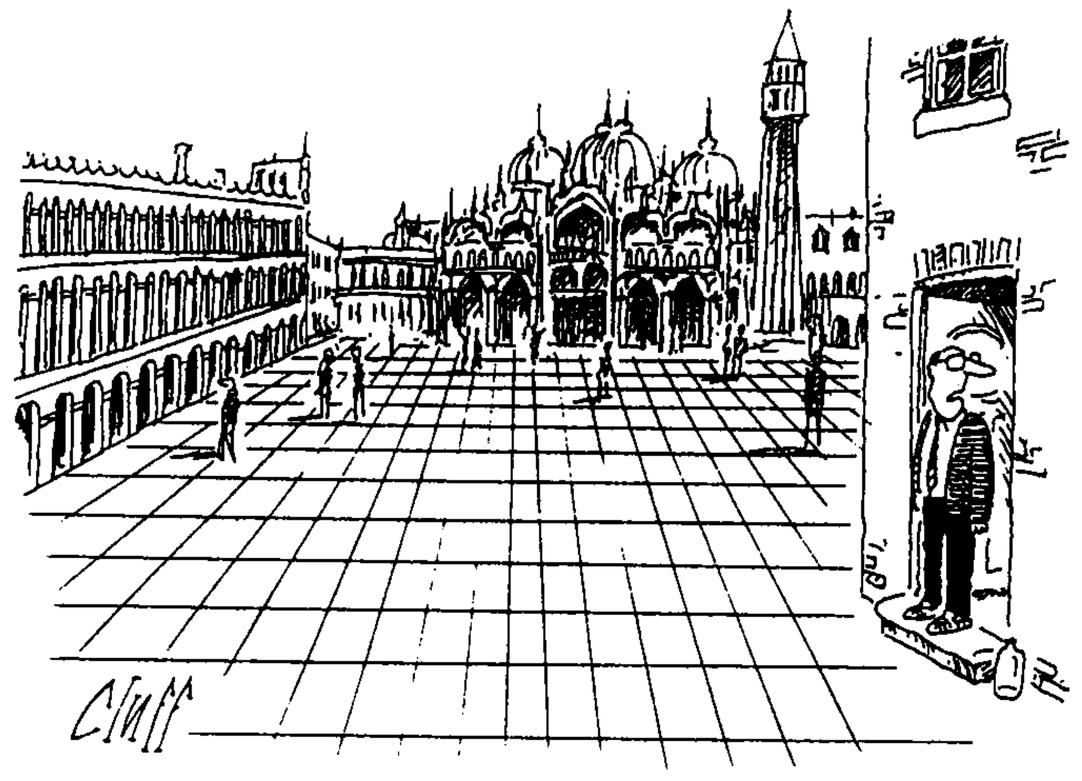
It is for this reason that the Beatles should rightly give way to the likes of Garbage, Pisspoor, Trash, Filth, Bad Yoghurt, Catflap and Dead Zebra.

IRA condemn mass killer

We, the Army Council of the Irish Republican Army, wish to express our outrage at the horrific events in Dunblane. A lone psychopath murdering innocent children in cold blood without any political, historic or military justification is an affront to all civilised, peace-loving people, and is something which we cannot in any circumstances condone.

Signed

S. O'SEMTEX
Chief of Staff
Kelly's Bar
Co. Boyo
Eire



"You haven't ordered anything from Dial-A-Piazza, have you Brenda?"

TOP RADIO STATION APOLOGISES TO WORLD'S GREATEST BAND

by Our Media Staff **Lunchtime O'Asis**

RADIO Neasden FM was last night forced into a humiliating U-turn.

Only yesterday, a spokesman for Neasden's No. 1 radio station had announced that the Turds, a popular singing group of the '60s, would not be featured ever again.

The spokesman said that the new single by the three surviving Turds called "Real Rubbish" would receive no airplay as none of the young Neasden FM listeners (Wayne and Simone Bonkers) had even heard of "the Fab Bore".

Please Play Me

But Neasden FM had not reckoned with the weight of protest from the Turd's record company, Crapple (UK). Managing director Keith Pimple, 37, rang the station personally, saying: "The Turds are the greatest group the world has ever known. And they have the best lawyers. Know what I mean?"

When I'm No. 64

Neasden FM's Controller, Eddie Spurt, 19, was quick to respond to the threat and today arranged a special "Golden Turd Hour" to be played "every day until the new record reaches Number one".

YOUR CHARTS TONIGHT

(as supplied by Radio Neasden's Chart Show, sponsored by The Star of India Balti House Experience, PriceRite Road)

1. **Real Rubbish**..... The Turds
2. **Free As A Turd** ..... The Turds
3. **All You Need Is Money** *(remix)* ..... The Turds
4. **Wonderful Turd** ..... Louis Armstrong & The Turds
5. **Your Tiny Turd Is Frozen** ... From *The 3 Tenors Sing The Turds*

(That's enough charts. Ed.)

Celeb

LIGGER

SO I RANG RADIO ONE AND DEMANDED TO KNOW WHY MY NEW SINGLE WASN'T ON THEIR PLAY LIST.
IT ALL GOT VERY NASTY. I ACCUSED THEM OF ONLY DOING IT 'COS OF MY AGE AND CALLED THEM AGEIST MUSIC CENSORS.
GOOD FOR YOU, GARY
THEN THIS WHIPPER-SNAPPER REPLIES: "YOU'RE NOT JUST OLD... YOU'RE POSITIVELY SENILE, MR BLOKE."
OUCH, GARY.
YEAH. APPARENTLY I HAVEN'T GOT A SINGLE OUT AT THE MOMENT...
YOU AND THAT MEMORY OF YOURS, GARY.
I DON'T KNOW...

BLONDE DATE

(Silly Music)

Cilla Black: Welcome back ladies and gentlemen. We've had a lorra larfs so far, and we're going to have a lorra more larfs right now. We've got one of our lovely couples from last week, who've come back after a night out together in historic Kensington Palace. And here they are — Di and Will! *(Audience cheer as smug looking blonde and shifty looking man take seats)* So — you two, how did it go?

Carling *(for it is he)*: Well, when she came out from behind the screen I thought, blimey, what a cracker. She looks just like my wife.

Cilla: Cor. Isn't he scrummy?

Audience: Yeah, yeah, could we have some more free drinks?

Cilla: And what about you, blondie? I bet you fancied him something rotten, didn't you, chuck?

Di *(pretending to blush)*: Ya, I thought, he'd be alright for a quick ruck.

Audience: Ooooh!

Cilla: Let's have a look at their day in the swanky Harbour Club in London's fashionable Chelsea.

(Cut to film of moronic looking couple on exercise bikes)

Will: How many have you done?

Di: I haven't been keeping count — but let me see, there was Olly, there was James, we don't count Chazza…

Will: Oo, you are a one…

(Enter Carling's wife. Film ends very suddenly. Back to studio)

Cilla: So, Will and Di, what we all want to know is, didya or didntya?

Di: Yes.

Will: No.

Audience: O-o-o-o… Errrr?

(Enter very angry blonde woman clutching "Satellite TV Woman of the Year" award. She hits husband over head)

Di: Can I have the other two fellas now, please Cilla?

Cilla: Worra lass! You've gotta give it to her, and I am sure Nos. 1 and 2 will.

Audience: Oooooohh! Can we go now??

Cilla: See you next week in another edition of Blonde Date when Paula will tell us how she got on with Michael!!

(Silly music. Ends.)

ADVERTISEMENT

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For example, for migraine the combination of Yurgwat and Sprigget oils is recommended. For cardiac arrests, the subtle essence of Dranipper should be applied with a single drop of concentrated Vroom. For rigor mortis, the Oil of Lazarus is widely believed to be efficacious. But find out for yourself.

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WARNING: These oils are extremely toxic and under no circumstances should they come into contact with the skin.

LATE NEWS

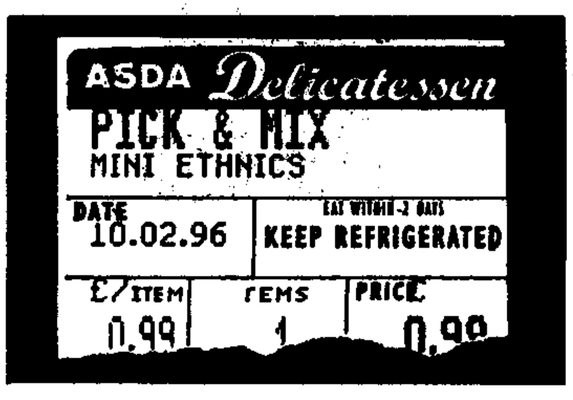
Dons fume at tainted Oxford Chair

OXFORD professors were last night in uproar over the university's decision to accept a new chair of communications funded by the notorious Mr Rupert Murdoch.

"Murdoch, a man who made his fortune as a 'Nasty', is trying to expiate his guilt over his unpleasant past," said one don who preferred not to be named in case his private life was turned over by the News of the World.

"You cannot buy respectability just by handing over a sackload of Nasty gold or rather you can."

(Reuters)



Poetry Corner

In Memoriam: Lines Written On The Death Of Lord Jay, Father Of Peter Jay

So. Farewell then
Lord Jay.

Tramp and groper.

Or alternatively
Leading Labour
Statesman.

There are times
When the art of the
Obituarist
Is not an easy
One.

E.J. Thribb (aged 17½)

A selection of the work of E.J. Thribb entitled *Nil Nisi Bonham-Carter* will be published by the Welsh Arts Council next month.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

WE'RE THE NEW ARISTOCRATIC MODELS. EVERYONE'S BORED OF YOU COMMON LOT.
WHAT WE'VE GOT IS CLASS.
IN ABOUT FIVE MINUTES ACTUALLY!
YA!
Kerber

AN OFFICIAL WARNING TO THE NATION

from Sir Jammy Fishpaste, Leader and Supreme Commander of the National Referendum Front, the political wing of Fishpaste Enterprises plc

Achtung!

This is the last warning to the people of Britain.

You now have less than a year to make up your minds over who should rule Britain.

Should it be Brussels or me? *(Shurely 'Westminster'? Ed. Nein. J.G.)*

All Conservative candidates are hereby warned. Either they accept my referendum or they will be attacked in their own constituencies by highly trained members of my own Referendum Army (SMERSH).

You think you have been so clever, Mr Bond. But I, Sir Jammy Goldfinger, will have the last laugh on you and your British government! Heh, heh, heh. *(Strokes white cat)*

Those Conservatives who are sensible enough to come over to my side may be spared.

But for the others — their fate is sealed. *(Throws cat into tank of piranha fish)* **That's what I call a fish policy. Heh, heh, heh.**

So, Mr Bond. *(Surely the name is 'Major' isn't it? Ed.)*

It is up to you. Either you join me now and capitulate to my demands.

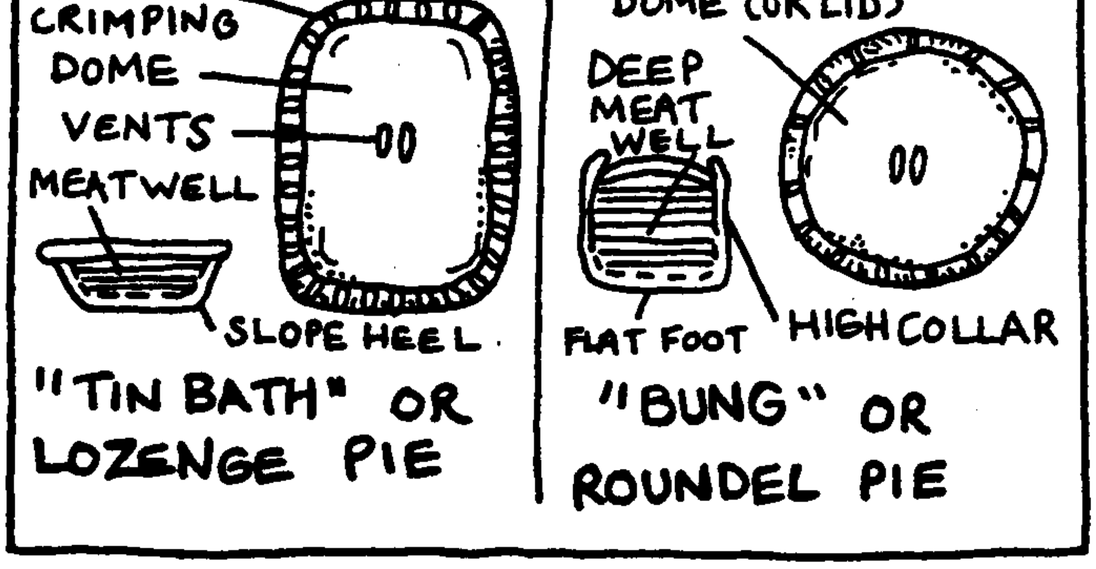
Or you will be destroyed utterly.

Remember. For you, Johnnie Major, the Conservative Party is over.

Signed,

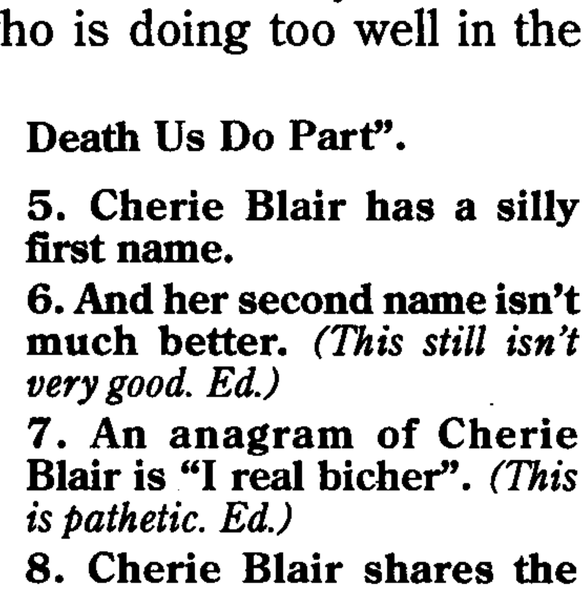
Jammy Fishpaste

Sir Jammy Fishquota,
The Monster Raving Referendum Party,
SAY DR NO TO BRUSSELS CAMPAIGN,
The Bunker, Somewhere in Mexico.



"She's going to need counselling. Gilbert and Sullivan have split up"

That Cherie Blair Dirt In Full



As dug up by Peter Hatchet of the Daily Exnewspaper

AT LAST we can reveal the real story of the evil woman behind the man who is doing too well in the polls for our liking.

1. Cherie Blair has repeatedly appeared in court in connection with a number of serious crimes.

2. Cherie Blair consorts with known criminals, some of whom go to prison shortly after their "assignations" with her.

3. Cherie Blair is a regular at the Bar where she wears flamboyant clothes, tight black tights and eye-catching wigs and she talks to older men in a loud voice. *(This isn't very good. Try something else. Ed.)*

4. Cherie Blair's father, Tony Booth, had links with a prominent racist — Alf Garnett in the series "Till Death Us Do Part".

5. Cherie Blair has a silly first name.

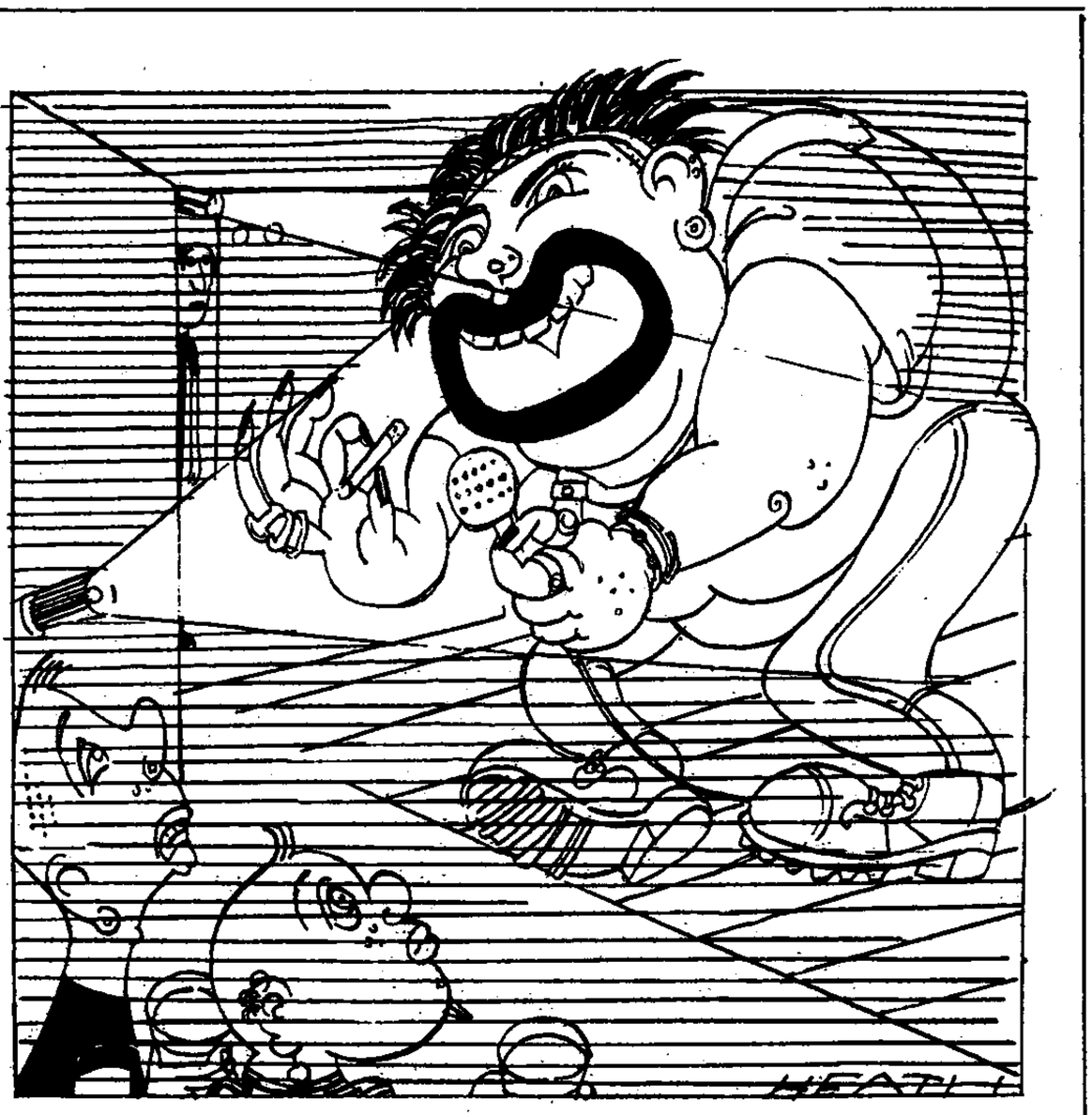
6. And her second name isn't much better. *(This still isn't very good. Ed.)*

7. An anagram of Cherie Blair is "I real bicher". *(This is pathetic. Ed.)*

8. Cherie Blair shares the same bed as a known member of the Labour Party and has even had children by him. *(You're fired. Ed.)*

9. Cherie Blair's husband is going to put up taxes. He is, you know.

10. Vote Conservative. *(Brilliant. You're hired again. Ed.)*



Great Bores Of Today.

"... ha ha ha no if men had to go through that every month you'd never hear the end of it oi you with the beard and glasses wake up I bet your dick is so small that the Hubble Telescope can't even see it ha ha ha blokes honestly they're only good for one thing and they're no good at that either ha ha ha well that one went down like my fella when I tell him to go down ha ha ha 'cause you have to tell them don't you girls? they don't want to do it do they? ha ha ha I went into the chemist and I said to the bloke 'What have you got for the time of the month?' and he said 'How about a calendar?' so I kicked him in the bollocks except I couldn't find any ha ha ha hey you bald bloke in the sweater you look like a good wank would kill you ha ha ha no if men had to go through that every month ha ha ha..."

A Prayer For Paul Johnson

by God

Almighty Me,

Look down we pray on all those who have red hair and red faces who have had too much to drink at the Garrick Club at lunchtime.

Give unto them the wisdom that they may refrain from writing thousands of words upon subjects about which they know nothing.

Deliver them from hypocrisy, lest they lash out in anger at others for committing sins of which they themselves have been guilty every day of their lives.

Give unto their wife Marigold an infinite fund of patience, forbearance, tolerance and general saintliness for she hath needed it these past forty years.

Vouchsafe that my servant Paul may cease from his wailing and gnashing of teeth, and take a vow of silence until his life's end.

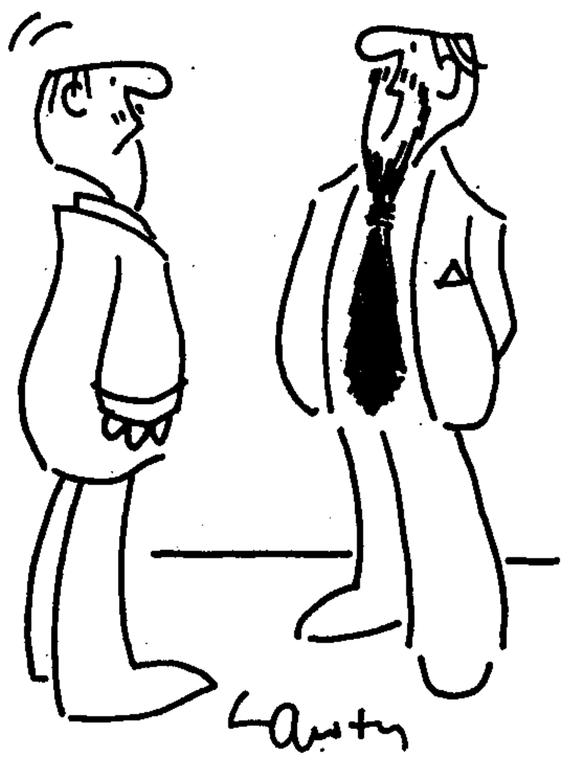
Amen

© The Supreme Being, c/o The Daily Telegraph.
In the Year of Myself 1996

Radio 4

Today

Humphrys: ...so, it's got to be stopped, hasn't it? This sort of thing cannot be allowed to go on. Every time there is a disaster, we can't just have a man sitting in a studio getting all high-pitched and hysterical, clamouring for something to be done and someone to be blamed, in a more and more querulous voice, when the only appropriate response is silence. Can we? I mean, there should be regulations to stop me (*continues screaming in same vein for several hours*).



"I like to economise!"

In his 27-word apology Atherton said: "I am sorry if I caused offence to a local journalist and local journalists during the conference."

Daily Telegraph

CHARITY ADVERTISEMENT

ONCE AGAIN the world's top musicians will be performing live at Wembley Station *(shurely 'Stadium'? Ed)* **to raise money for the world's poor and underprivileged** *(Paula Yates)*.

The event, not organised by Bob Geldof, hopes to raise both public sympathy and a huge amount of cash.

So far top names like Michael Hutchence of the group IOU and Michael Hutchence of the group IOU have agreed to play for nothing. Also, IOU's Michael Hutchence has signed up, as has Michael Hutchence from the number one band IOU.

Just remember that you too can play your part in 'Wive Aid' and alleviate the suffering of the world's Paula.

- **£300 will pay for her weekly groceries.**
- **£12,000 will pay for a chauffeur to drive her children to school.**
- **£50,000 will pay for some more cosmetic surgery.**
- **£500,000 will pay her mortgage.**
- **£10 million might keep her quiet for a while.**

STOP PRESS

Latest name to sign up for the World's Greatest Charity Show — IOU's Michael Hutchence.

That Historic Government White Paper On Europe in full

1. This is the toughest White Paper on Europe ever produced by any government.

2. Do not misunderstand us. The European Union has brought Britain huge benefits.

3. But Brussels has made itself ridiculous over the European Court of Justice, the Common Agricultural Policy, the fish, the 48-hour week, the straight bananas and hundreds of other European decisions of which we are all too well aware.

4. The British Government has decided that it is time to take a very firm line indeed about all this nonsense.

5. But not yet.

6. The Government has made its position absolutely clear.

7. We shall decide what that position is when circumstances are favourable to making a decision.

8. We shall seek to achieve major changes in the Treaty over the European Court of Justice, the Common Agricultural Policy, the fish, the 48-hour week, the straight bananas and all the rest.

9. But we are of course aware that there is no hope of achieving any of these things.

10. We believe very strongly and robustly that the European Union can best function as a community of independent, sovereign nations making their own laws.

11. Except for the laws which have to be made in Brussels and which of course supersede all national law — e.g. the European Court of Justice, the Common Agricultural Policy, the fish, the 48-hour week, straight bananas and all the rest.

12. Er... **13.** That's it.

© M. Rifkind pp J. Santer

The Other 14 Lay Out Their Plans

1. Ignore Britain.

2. Full steam ahead for the European Superstate, with complete political union at every level, a common Army and Police Force, a common currency and an elected President answerable to the Bundesbank.

3. Fish for all (except Britain).

4. Er...

5. Do not wrap your fish in this paper. It is illegal under 96/437 and is punishable by death.

© J. Santer pp H. Kohl

SADVERTISEMENT

1
RIGHT. I WANT SOME IDEAS FOR A NEW AD CAMPAIGN FOR MERCURY.
AD AGENCY
2
IT'S GOT TO CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS IN AN ORIGINAL, CREATIVE AND YET HUMOROUS FASHION.
3
THREE DAYS LATER...
SO. NO IDEAS AT ALL? OK, WE'LL RUN WITH THAT
The WORLD of OLIVER CLAIRE BOGLEBY HARGELL & PRATT
No. 94

Those Amis Diaries

What You Will Never Read

Tuesday (or was it Wednesday?)
Got up. Went to Garrick Club. No one there, especially me. Had a few. Mozart — what a bloody old bore. Give me good old Satchmo any day. Or preferably a Jack Daniel's.

Wednesday (or was it Friday?)
Got up. Went to Garrick. Had a few. Saw Robin[1]. Or may have been Perry[2]. Give me a sherry any day. Old Shakespeare's pretty overrated. Fellow was a poof, if you ask me.

Thursday (I think)
Got up. Went to Garrick. Who's this fellow called Martin Amis who's in all the papers and everyone says is good? Well I don't think he is. I've never heard of him. Had a few. Asked the porter "Who's this bloody Kingsley Amis everyone's on about?" He'd never heard of him. Give me Jelly Roll Morton and custard any day.

Friday
Didn't get up. I think I may be dead. Bloody overrated, if you ask me. *(The legendary Amis diaries ended here.)*

© Disputed between Sir Martin Amis and Eric Jacobs

"HETEROSEXUALS to serve in the armed forces?!"

DIARY

PETER MANDELSON

What do you mean, I just spilt gravy over my tie? Eh? I'm not allowing you to get away with making these wholly bogus allegations. Don't get all defensive. I'm just asking what specifically you were implying when you suggested I had spilt gravy over my tie? Get a grip. I was wearing that tie — an old, inexpensive tie, incidentally. If you can be bothered to check the facts — for the specific purpose of soaking up the gravy at the exact time I planned to spill it. Under my guidance, and the realistic eye of New Labour, the gravy has now successfully consolidated its position on the tie. That was the objective to which I was priorly committed, and both the tie and the gravy contributed to our achieving that objective. Instead of continually carping, let's for once rejoice at this exciting new partnership of tie and gravy, going forward together in a genuine new synthesis of aims and ideals to tackle and revitalise the relevant issues that lie before us.

CASE HISTORY (1): Eileen lives on the third floor of a council block. She finds it a struggle to keep tidy. Her son Billy has a nervous tic. Billy has a mate called Stan who sometimes enjoys a cup of Herbal Tea. Stan's ex-wife Flo has a part-time job in a local florist's. Flo is a non-smoker, though her next-door neighbour Sally is still trying to give up. Sally met Eileen once, but didn't take to her.

So what exactly can New Labour do for Eileen, Billy, Stan, Flo and Sally? It is June, 1998. The New Labour government under Tony Blair has brought a new depth of vision and genuine vitality to the country. Eileen now employs a daily help to keep her flat tidy. Billy has been cured by the NHS of his nervous tic, and now earns £50,000 a year as a computer operative. Billy's mate Stan runs his own Herbal Tea company, and is exporting to the Pacific Rim. Britain under New Labour is decorated from top to bottom with flowers, so Stan's ex-wife Flo's job in her local florist's is now full-time, with a comprehensive pension scheme and private health insurance. Helped by a robust and caring public information stratagem, Sally has managed to give up smoking. She met Eileen again recently, and now the two are the very best of friends.

Conclusion? Again and again, tests have proved that New Labour under Tony Blair *can* deliver. Don't ask me — ask Eileen, who I've just made up.

Old Labour doesn't set much store by washing its socks.

Whereas New Labour has clean laundry delivered every day.

Old Labour ate sandwiches, chips and sticky buns.

Whereas New Labour is committed to a balanced diet, with an accent firmly on nutrition.

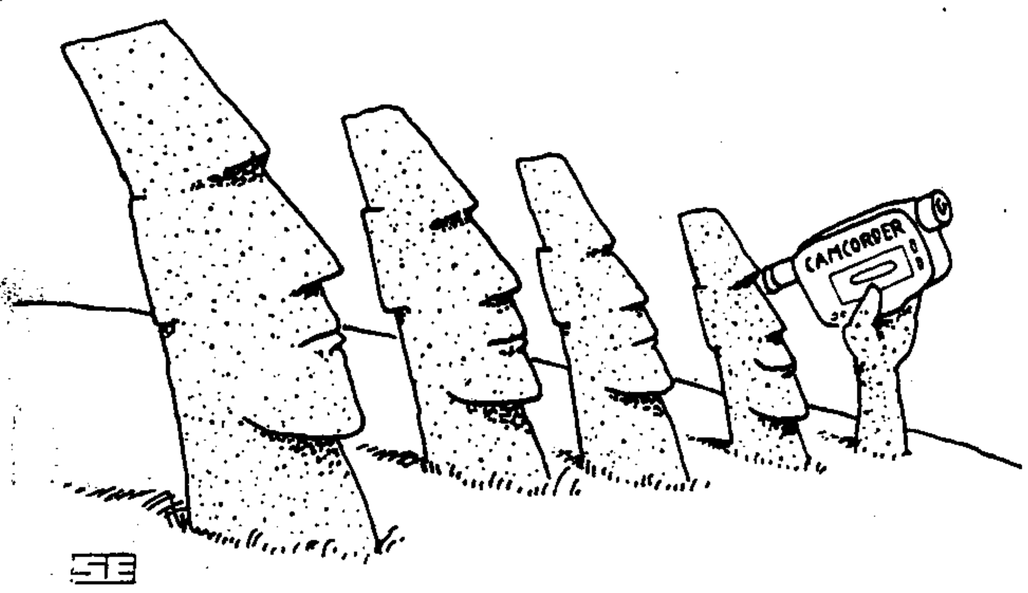
Old Labour in its ideological zealotry sometimes forgot that it was wrong to murder old folk in their homes.

Whereas New Labour appreciates the immense service provided by old folk. Under *New Labour*, highly motivated teams of committed young people will assist in the rebuilding of communities by calling on old folk and helping put their cats out at night, chanting, "Puss, puss, puss — come along, puss" under trained supervision.

Tony Blair is a modest, unassuming family man. When he steps through the door of Number 10, he will no doubt feel that it is a bit too grand and old-fashioned for his modest, unassuming wife Cherie and their two modest, unassuming kids. So, taking the advice of an expert, he will probably prefer to move his home and office to some lesser building, making way for an unmarried single man with more time on his hands and a wealth of realistic knowledge about the presentation and implementation of policies — let's call him Peter — to take over the day-to-day running of the country. For all its grandeur and tradition, Number 10 will suit Peter well. Peter will refurbish it and redecorate it to make it more relevant to the needs of today's modern man. Cabinet will continue to meet in Number 10, of course, under Peter's aegis, thus saving the modest, unassuming Tony Blair much more precious time to enjoy his modest, unassuming family. Yes, *New Labour* believes first and foremost in *delegation to Peter.*

Who is the real Tony Blair? A modern voice and a devoted family man. A man who goes to Church every Sunday, and is always delighted to see Peter Mandelson waving at him from the back. Like Peter Mandelson, he is a dab hand at cooking, always helping Cherie with the dishes. Tony is an easy, approachable man with good, strong thighs and well-rounded buttocks. He enjoys playing tennis and reading a good book — often one recommended by his close friend and adviser Peter Mandelson. His ambition is to see the world and help other people. His confidantes include Peter Mandelson, whom he acknowledges as the principal architect of New Labour, and the man who singlehandedly won Labour the 1987 General Election. Together, he hopes that under New Labour they will build on Mrs Thatcher's outstanding achievements. Together, the two of them will be able to feel the earth move.

Get a grip. I'm sick to the back teeth of being described as Machiavellian. So I'm taking steps to knock it on the head, and developing a genuinely open, honest and accountable five-point strategic plan with this in mind. *Step One*: I ring my good friend Gordon and tell him that Robin, with whom I am on excellent terms, says that Tony says that Harriet is to Chair a new committee on future economic policy. *Step Two*: Gordon storms out of the Shadow Chancellor's office to remonstrate with Tony. While Gordon is out, I nip into his office and borrow some headed notepaper. *Step Three*: I write a letter marked Highly Confidential from Gordon to Prescott saying how very unscheming I think Peter Mandelson is, and how Machiavellian is the very last word one would think to use about him. *Step Four*: I leak this memo anonymously to The World at One, thus saving Gordon any embarrassment. *Step Five*: I telephone the producer of World at One. How dare you broadcast a confidential memo, I say, you damn well haven't heard the last of this and don't you realise I am a personal friend of John Birt? "...and I don't care whether my good friend the Shadow Chancellor leaked that memo or not," I add, in case he hasn't put two and two together. Result: at last everyone realises Peter Mandelson is not Machiavellian in the slightest, and that I want only what is best for Tony and for the Party, and for those millions of ordinary decent working people the length and breadth of the country who are in desperate need of the kind of leadership only I can provide. So no more of this "spin doctor" nonsense, eh? EH?



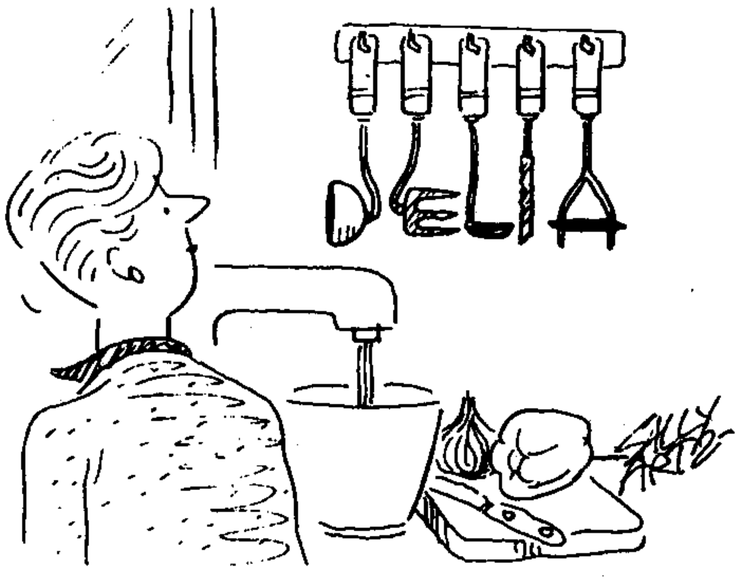
The William Morris Society's centenary visit (April 24) will be to Standen in Sussex, 30 miles south of London, a hillside house built by a Morris partner, containing his wallpapers and testicles.

East African Standard

LIVING BAR COUPLE

required for popular Young's Pub in Dulwich area. Must be experienced and hardworking.

South London Press



Literary Review

Master Baker

The Size of Thoughts: Essays and Other Lumber
Nicholson Baker
(Chatto & Windus, £16.99)

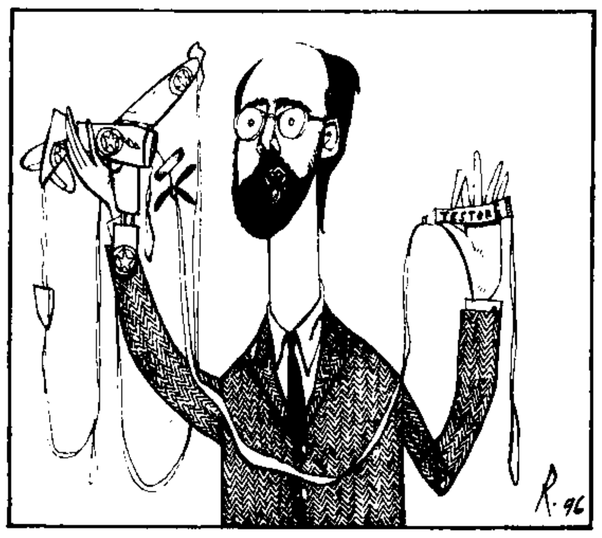
THIS is an immensely tedious book. Its tedium is so majestic, its inertia so paralysing, so quick to transform the mind of its reader into a series of gaping mental chambers, a chain of inviolable, interior zeros that... But no, let us stop writing like Nicholson Baker — an all-too imitable stylist, sadly — and consider the phenomenon that he so amiably, so painstakingly, so inscrutably (*That's enough. Ed.*) represents.

Nicholson Baker? He's a smart guy. I mean, Martin Amis interviewed him a while back (see *Visiting Mrs Nabokov and Other Excursions*) and you can't get much hipper than that. Nicholson Baker is one of the new American solipsists, or rather *the* new American solipsist. And they are? Imagine one of those monomaniacal columnists that the broadsheets love to employ — the Julie Myersons and the Zoe Hellers — only granted erudition, irony and some transatlantic bumptiousness, and you've got it. *The Mezzanine* and *Room Temperature*, Nick's early ones, were 40,000 word daydreams, gossamer reveries, sentence upon ruminative sentence spun out of, well, nothing very much. The critics *loved* them.

Nick's essays are a mixed bag — musings on language, artefacts, thoughts, fragments from the desk-drawer, even the speech he made at his sister's wedding: "I love them both," the proud brother concludes, "and I love the fact that in this evening of silk sleeves and white chairs, of taut tenting and rustling relatives, their lives are being changed forever, and they are being wed." (Did someone say self-regarding? Honey, this is a serious artist we got here.)

What unites the essays is a tantalising inability to work out when a conceit stops being interesting and becomes nerve-grindingly boring. The piece on model aeroplane kits is a case in point: fine, dandy stuff until Nick simply gets carried away with his own reminiscent verbosity: "When you tweaked off the dried wastrel from an earlier session and applied a gentle pressure to the Testor's tube, a brand-new Steuben-grade art-blob of cooling poison would silently ensphere itself at the machined metal tip, looking, with its sharp, gnomonic surface highlights and distilled vodkal interior purity, like a self-contained world of incorruptible mental concentration, the voluptuously pantographed miniaturization of the surrounding room..." We're talking about glueing a plane kit together here, by the way.

Such epically mystifying portentousness is Nick's kind of bagel, though. As winsome intro succeeds winsome intro ("Has anyone yet said publicly how nice it is to write on rubber with a ball-point pen?"), his distinguishing marks declare themselves: pleonasm ("These are excellent words, husband and wife, they lean towards each other, they exist in reference to each other, they link arms..."); hulking lists (scholars consult "dictionaries, indexes, bibliographies, biographies, concordances, catalogs..." and so on down to the



end of the page); and that endless highbrow Yankee capacity for dressing up the startlingly obvious in fine-sounding persiflage. Thus: "there is a deep chasm, no doubt essentially vulval, of reciprocal incomprehensibility that normally separates the gay cosmology from the prevailing straightgeist." He means we're, uh, *different*.

Never mind the withering self-absorption; what really drags Nick down is something much more straightforward: lack of judgment. Regrettably he just doesn't know when to stop. The essay on punctuation is a perfect example of this. Having made the reasonable point that users of language are habituated to commas and semi-colons, he can't prevent himself from wittering uncontrollably on about them being "so pipe-smokingly Indo-European, so naturally suited in their disjunctive charge and mass to their given sentential offices..." In another literary heritage, this would be called showing off.

Books & Bookmen

■ **REED-ELSEVIER's failure to find a buyer for Reed Books is quite remarkable.**

The asking price had been around £250 million, but Reed-Elsevier had reluctantly been prepared to sell the entire shooting match to Virgin for £100 million. However, Virgin reduced its bid to £80 million after the process of due diligence. Reed-Elsevier was deeply embarrassed, having trumpeted to anyone who would listen that this would be the publishing sale of the century.

How relieved it was when Electra then appeared on the scene. However, Electra valued the group at a mere £70 million. Reed-Elsevier has taken Reed Books off the market and has withdrawn in some disarray.

□ THE latest wheeze of W.H. Smug's dynamic new teenage "adult books" supremo, Jo Howard, is that, when paying homage to Smug in Swindon, publishers should *pay* for the privilege of trying to sell their forthcoming titles.

In addition, publishers will be expected to concede even larger discounts to Smug than they do at present. Ms Howard, who has risen overnight from a middle ranking warehouse job, has also decreed that individual Smug branches may not acquire titles of local interest unless on single copies publishers will give them a minimum discount of 48 percent. This would put out of business most of the UK's small and local publishing houses.

Ms Howard, less than three weeks into her new job, was shuffled off to the Independent Publishers' annual conference earlier in the month to try to justify her crass decision. She is likely to return to the warehouse soon.

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

THE BOOK: *Who goes home?* by Roy Hattersley.

THE HYPE: More political insight from the witty pen of this seasoned socialist.

THE PRICE: Published by Little, Brown and Company for £17.99, now selling at Fair Deal Books of Windsor at £3.99 or three for a tenner.

'Bookworm'

O·B·N

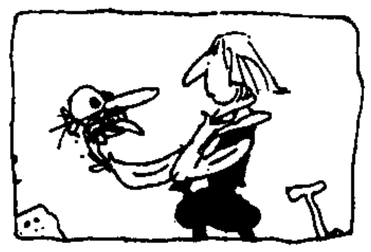
Would he fluff his lines or stumble at the critical moment? Of course, he didn't. He's an old pro...

The DPM's [deputy prime minister's] oratory powers came to the fore. The opposition had chosen to debate housing — a subject close to my father's heart — and within minutes Prescott had been floored; not once, but twice... As we would say at home "The boy done well."

ANNABEL HESELTINE
(relation) writing about daddy in the Sunset Times

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

LUVVIES



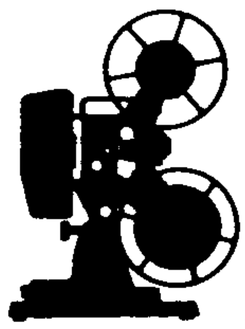
With three other films awaiting release this year, Travolta has it all — except an Oscar nomination for Get Shorty. "Everyone seemed to assume that I would get one, and when it didn't happen it hit me like a tidal wave.

"Then I had to get over it and get on with my life. I have put my personal hurt aside and, really, I'm pleased for the people who did get chosen."

Daily Mail

Submitted by Francis Harvey.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for submissions.



MOVIE NEWS

THE *Daily Telegraph*'s thrusting new film critic James Dellingpole will have to do something about his ears.

One of his first tasks was to review the Emma Thompson *Sense and Sensibility*, which he conscientiously went to see twice. His review centred on Thompson's screenplay, which Dellingpole deemed most unsuitable as it was too liberally spattered with 20th century language — quite unbecoming of the original Jane Austen novel, he felt.

To back this up he recalled a line from the film in which Willoughby parodies the matchmaker Mrs Jennings to the young heroines. He quoted him: "*If we do not have you married by teatime I shall swallow my own vomit.*" Dellingpole pompously noted: "The crudity is all Thompson's".

Er, no actually. As *Torygraph* readers with a copy of Thompson's published screenplay were quick to point out, Willoughby had not mentioned vomit but had said: "*If we do not have you married by teatime I shall swallow my own bonnet.*" The crudity was, unfortunately, Dellingpole's: perhaps the Arts desk can have a whip round and get him a Herbert Gusset-style ear trumpet.

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
DO YOU HAVE PETER MANDELSON'S BOOK?
CUT PRICE
20% OFF
OVER THERE, SLIGHTLY TO THE RIGHT OF MRS THATCHER'S
CUT PRICE

footnotes

Another horror story from British Gas

BRITISH Gas's deep concern for its customers in the age of privatisation and fat cats is admirably illustrated by the case of Keith and Sue Garwood.

Soon after they bought their house in Radlett, Herts, the Garwooods decided to replace the dilapidated central heating system. "We had two quotes," says Keith Garwood, "but we chose the more expensive one from British Gas because we wanted a reputable company."

In June 1994 three directly-employed British Gas workers started the job. Three days later the three workers packed up their tools and ran out of the house. The Garwoods were told that the whole house was covered in lethal asbestos dust which had been released in vast quantities from the lagging of the old heating pipes. British Gas had not even inspected the pipes, let alone given any warning of any potential danger.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was called in, and insisted on drastic action. The Garwoods were ordered out of their home. For a month they lived with friends and in hotels while their house was sealed off and completely gutted by an asbestos clean-up firm. Sofas, armchairs, newly-bought beds, curtains, carpets and even floorboards were packed in polythene bags and destroyed. The Royal Insurance (that's the one with all those fancy ads advising people to "ring the Royal") announced that its comprehensive home insurance policy didn't cover asbestos. Slowly, and by expensive borrowing, the Garwoods started to replace every single thing they had ever owned.

British Gas, meanwhile, had vanished from the scene. It refused to answer any calls or enter any negotiations. Then, in November 1994, British Gas appeared before Watford magistrates charged on four counts under the health and safety at work act: that it had no licence to deal with asbestos; that it had made no proper assessment of the risk from asbestos; that exposure to the dust was not contained in the house or on the site. British Gas pleaded guilty, blamed its workers and was fined £18,000.

Despite such clear proof of its criminally negligent activity, British Gas continued to resist the Garwoods' claims for compensation. The couple sent in a modest £47,810 bill for losses — all covered by receipts. British Gas and its insurers' loss adjuster prevaricated and quibbled. They complained, for instance, about the value of the clothes which had been lost. Their "final offer" is £40,500 — more than £7,000 short of the couple's direct losses.

The Garwoods were reluctant to accept a sum which leaves them so substantially out of pocket, and cannot afford the huge legal expenses of taking British Gas to court. Searching for an independent arbitrator, they contacted the Gas Consumers Council, which has now been told by Eversheds, British Gas's solicitors, that since the Garwoods had not immediately accepted the offer, the company's legal fees will now be deducted from the £40,500. These fees have not yet been disclosed, but the Garwoods now fear that they will be left with next to nothing.

Thus, while British Gas's top executives get fatter and fatter doing less and less, and while the company's advertising gets more and more preposterous, the new privatised gas monopoly treats its customers with unremitting negligence, parsimony and contempt.

OPERA WINDFALL

■ **LAST July, when he announced that £55 million of lottery money would go to the Royal Opera House. Lord Gowrie, chairman of the Arts Council of England, attached a number of conditions which "would have to be met before funding is finally committed". The main one was that "the project must achieve full planning consent from Westminster council and satisfy all attached conditions".**

Planning permission was granted by Westminster in October, but a large number of attached conditions still had to be satisfied. Before they were even discussed, the Arts Council started dishing out the lottery money to the Opera House. It has already admitted handing out £2.3 million, and the *Eye* understands it has told the Opera House it can draw up to £20 million more without any hassle.

Whoops! On 29 February a Westminster council committee turned down the Opera House's latest designs for satisfying the conditions. The committee ruled that the changes in the plans were so substantial that a completely fresh application had to be made. Thus the main condition set out by Lord Gowrie himself for handing out lottery money to the Opera House has not been met — but he is handing out the money anyway.

LORD GOWRIE

Meanwhile, the Opera House "development" proceeds, with closures and evictions of long-established and popular restaurants and coffee houses.

PS: The project managers for the £219 million development are Stanhope plc, whose managing director Stuart Lipton is on the opera house development project steering group.

PPS: Much of the surveying work will be done by Jones Laing Wootton, whose director Robin Broadhurst is also on the steering group.

PPPS: The enormous overdraft for the Royal Opera House is cheerfully sustained by Coutts bank whose director and former chairman Sir David Money-Coutts (*sic*) is controller of the Royal Opera House Development Land Trust.

FRESHFIELDS AND PASTURES NEW

■ **FOR the first time in history the finance bill, which aims to simplify and tighten up the tax laws, has been drafted with the help of City experts who normally advise rich clients how to avoid tax.**

Every previous finance bill has been drafted by government and Inland Revenue lawyers. The new recruitment (at taxpayers' expense) of experts from private City law firms was introduced by the chancellor, Kenneth Clarke.

Top of the new advisers' list is Freshfields, the huge city law firm. A team from the firm has been working on a "simplification" of the law about tax on foreign dividends, and on interest accrued by banks and stockbrokers — two of the richest sources of revenue in the City. Freshfields has advised on methods of avoiding tax in a host of recent City deals: the takeover of Courage by Scottish and Newcastle, for instance.

EDWARD TROUP

Two other City law firms specialising in tax avoidance have been helping the government with laws they specialise in avoiding. Nabarro Nathanson is drafting a law on the EU directive on VAT. Simmons & Simmons has loaned the government one of its most valuable assets: Edward Troup, formerly senior partner and head of corporate tax.

Troup, who has saved several top clients millions in unnecessary tax, is now fully employed, at our expense, as "special adviser on tax issues" to the chancellor. Simmons & Simmons says it is "delighted". Alan Carr, senior partner, explained: "Naturally, we are sorry to lose him in the short term but we hope that he will return to the firm in due course."

The *Eye* asked the treasury if there was a problem here of possible conflict of interest. A spokesman replied: "The treasury would have looked at that very carefully, I'm sure, in drawing up not only the people involved but also the detailed contract that would have been signed before they took on the work. They would make it clear that the work the advisers would be doing would be done in confidence and that separate teams would be set up by the companies to deal with this particular work."

HEAR NO EVIL, etc (left to right) BUTLER, GOULDEN and CLARK.

Three men in the soup

■ **CONTEMPT of parliament is an extremely serious offence which in extreme cases *can be punished by imprisonment in the Tower of London.* While the government hopes the Scott inquiry will vanish into obscurity, a bunch of angry Labour MPs are seeking to charge some very important people with contempt of parliament.**

The most common complaint against the VIPs is that they deliberately deceived or obstructed the work of the House of Commons trade and industry select committee on supergun, which reported just before the general election in 1992.

Among those most obviously accused of this by Scott are:

Sir Robin Butler, cabinet secretary, and **Sir Michael Quinlan**, the former permanent secretary at the ministry of defence who refused to authorise or facilitate the appearance of two retired MoD officials who knew the facts about the government's knowledge about supergun long before the gun was seized by customs. This, says Scott (K8.1 (vii)), "had the effect of depriving the Select Committee of the first hand evidence it had sought". It therefore (F4.66) "may be regarded as a failure to comply fully with the obligations of accountability owed to Parliament".

John Goulden, then a senior foreign office official, who in his evidence to the committee was asked if he had taken part in an inquiry by Sir Robin Butler, cabinet secretary, into supergun. At first he refused to answer. Then, in a note, he said: "There was never any inquiry by Sir Robin Butler." Yet the Scott report refers again and again to a cabinet office inquiry into supergun. For instance: "The final version of the Iraqi gun project note was submitted by Sir Robin Butler on 11 December 1990 (F3.43). Mr Goulden is now Her Majesty's ambassador in Ankara.

Alan Clark. In evidence to the committee, Clark, then minister for defence procurement, flatly denied that the government had sent a telegram to the Belgian government in 1989 warning it that a Belgian company had a contract to supply propellant for the supergun. The telegram proved quite clearly that the government knew about the supergun at least four months before it was seized by customs. Scott (F3.69) prints the text of the telegram, and is not very impressed with Alan Clark's denial that it ever existed. The telegram was also firmly denied to the committee by a senior MoD civil servant sitting next to Mr Clark: Mr Nicholas Bevan, now secretary to the speaker of the Commons.

STAGECOACH .v. STAGECOACH

■ **BRIAN COX, director of Stagecoach Holdings, the company which is buying up bus and rail companies all over the country in the interests of free competition, was a key speaker at the recent Chartered Institute of Transport conference.**

"Conservative policy," he whinged, "is by no means free of control mania. Look at the amazing extent of office of fair trading and monopolies and mergers commission involvement in our evolving bus industry, for example."

Modestly Mr Cox did not name the company with the highest number of references to and criticisms by the OFT and the MMC — usually for forcing smaller and poorer competitors off the road by the most shameless predatory behaviour: er, Stagecoach (see *Eye* 867).

Meanwhile the Stagecoach Theory of Free Competition is being put to the test on the run between Bournemouth and Brighton. The rail route has been taken over by Stagecoach, whose executives are looking forward to some keen competition with the firm which runs the bus route between the two cities: Stagecoach.

Wide Colonial boys

■ THE management of the Mineworkers Pension Scheme (MPS), the biggest pension fund in the country, is up for grabs.

For reasons that are not clear, Friends Provident, the first institution "selected" to run the fund, has been rejected by the MPS trustees. A keen contender to step into the breach is the Colonial Mutual Group, which is boasting all over the place about of its prowess in the pension field.

Curiously, Colonial is rather bashful about the number of suckers its agents managed to persuade to opt out of their occupational schemes and into its own private pensions, which were much, much worse (see *Swindlers' List*, *Eyes* 840 and 890).

Nor does Colonial Mutual give much publicity to the fact that it organised special teams to visit pits which were closing to "recruit" miners into private pensions. Who could be better suited to run a miners' pension scheme than a firm which taught its agents how to persuade miners out of it?

DOUBLE BARON

■ **NO ONE could be better qualified than the fourth Baron de Ramsey (above) to lead the Environment Agency, the brand new super-quango which takes over all water inspection and is therefore likely to be in constant conflict with the private water companies.**

The noble lord holds a valuable 12,000 shares in the Cambridge Water Company — indeed he was chairman of the company from 1985 to 1991, during which time it was twice criticised for pollution, once for a discharge of chlorine and once for high levels of pesticide in the water supply.

On 14 March the *Eye* asked Lord de Ramsey if he anticipated any conflict of interest were any complaint made about Cambridge Water to his new agency. No reply as yet.

PS: Lord de Ramsey lives in Huntingdon. His MP is John Major.

Seedy ROM

■ DAVID JAMIESON, Labour MP for Plymouth Devonport, has been discovering a curious coincidence about several small businesses in his area which have recently gone bust. They all had government grants.

Character Ceramics, a Cornish company, bust in 1994, had had "regional selective assistance" (RSA) worth £104,000; ModernTask, bust in 1991, had a regional development grant (RDG) of £78,228; SW Leisure Products had RSA of £23,085 in 1985 and an RDG of £66,900 in 1989, but was dissolved in 1991. Then there was A. Beare and Sons, Bredy Agriculture, Cox and Sons, Brompton House PLC, Graffiti Management PLC, Porthcurno Management Co Ltd — the government won't yet say how much taxpayers' money they got, but they got something and now they are all bust, dissolved, in liquidation or receivership.

Most of these firms have something else in common: Kenneth Holmes CBE.

Holmes was from 1980-1984 chairman of the South West Industrial Development Board, a quango which advised the DTI which firms best deserved handouts of taxpayers' money. Then from 1991 to 1995 he became a paid adviser to the DTI, advising on RSA.

One firm which caught his eye was the ROM Data Corporation Ltd of Falmouth, which he recommended for RSA although (or perhaps because) its mastermind was one John Dawson, an ambitious former Bath Tory councillor whose garage empire went bust in 1980 with debts of £1.4 million. Without attending his bankruptcy proceedings, Dawson went to St Lucia where he hired out luxury yachts until he returned once again to British business — the ROM Data Corporation.

In spite of Dawson's lurid background, the DTI, on Holmes's advice, dished out £825,000 in regional selective assistance to ROM Data. Not long after the money was paid over, Holmes joined the board of ROM Data. Despite the generous government grant, the company was plagued by almost permanent difficulties and collapsed in December 1994 in circumstances so suspicious the serious fraud squad is investigating.

How did Mr Holmes have such extraordinary influence with the government? The answer is embarrassingly obvious. He is a member of the Totnes Tory party, which is chaired by his wife.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 2183

In the City

THE DECISION of the Department of Timidity and Inaction to resume its supposedly completed second bite at the Anglia Television insider dealing cherry appears to mystify all but the inspectors.

Why a former Smith New Court senior executive should be summoned for three hours of questioning in January, weeks after the DTI had reportedly closed its book, suggests either new information or a desire to ensure all avenues have been explored before the report is written. How embarrassing it would be if the DTI had to ask the inspectors to take a third look.

An added mystery is that the former Smith New Court executive, who worked on the MAI bid for Anglia, denies any connection with either Jeffrey Archer (target of the first inconclusive DTI investigation) or the story-teller's friend Karen Morgan Thomas (target of the second).

In particular he denies receiving any call at home from Archer's office ahead of the bid. Something of a surprise as the DTI is believed to have been told of itemised telephone records indicating a call was indeed made. Such records, of course, do not prove who was on the line.

However, the former broker has been pressed to produce both his and his wife's diaries indicating that the inspectors are being nothing if not thorough.

Another reason for the reawakened DTI interest may be the discovery that a friend of Archer's Kurdish chum Broosk Saib worked for Smith New Court at the time of the Anglia bid in January 1994. However, it is claimed he was in no way involved in or knowledgeable about the MAI deal. Kurdish walls, etc.

And anyway Archer said he bought the Anglia shares for Saib as a favour after recommending them to his chum following reading about a possible bid. So he or Saib could hardly have been tipped off, could they?

Meanwhile further evidence of the great story-teller's somewhat limited innate investment acumen has been revealed by reports that he may have lost £375,000 to a Japanese broker touting a $10 million get-rich-quick scheme. The details suggest that Archer was a victim of the same scam that hit on the Salvation Army, this time involving the non-existent market in prime bank guarantees rather than standby letters of credit. Given the publicity the Salvation Army and similar scams had received before Archer invested in late 1994 it does seem remarkable that he should have gone ahead.

But perhaps this illustrates two facets which may be relevant to the Anglia inquiry which found insufficient evidence of insider dealing over his "grave error" in purchasing shares in a company of which he wife was a director. One, Archer is a man prepared to take big risks for big rewards. Two, he knows the square root of nothing about investment and relies/acts on what others tell him. No wonder the fragrant Mary denied she ever told him about the MAI bid. Perhaps she did not need to?

THE DECISION of the Rumanian authorities last week to sack the senior management of the Dacia Felix Bank is certain to set alarm bells ringing at the Bank of England. Since last year Bank regulators and City Police investigators are understood to have had more than a passing interest in Dacia Felix and its former administrator Sever Muresan because of plans to do business in Britain.

Muresan was removed last year as Dacia Felix administrator, despite being a major shareholder, after allegations that he had misappropriated $300 million for his own business interests. The Rumanian authorities removed 10 top executives and took over the bank after discovering grave irregularities in Dacia Felix's credit and currency operations.

The Bank of England had been alerted to Dacia Felix and Muresan's ambitions when it was approached by Sir Leslie Young, a former Bank of England director. Young had been invited to join Muresan's SM Invest group. That invitation owed much, it is believed,, to Young's former role in the demised financial empire of community serving conman Roger Levitt.

The Levitt connection with Muresan and Dacia Felix came through certainly Trevor Owen, the former Levitt Group executive who became the bankrupt conman's landlord, and possibly mysterious financier and commodity dealer Felix Posen, a Levitt associate/client. There are some who believe Posen to be the Felix half of the Rumanian bank but this is unconfirmed.

SM (which stands for Muresan rather than his sexual predilictions) is also said to be connected with a son of former US Secretary of State George Schultz and to have interests in import/export, airlines and insurance in Rumania and France. Its British operations began last year linked to plans to do business in Pakistan and Venezuela.

There has been discussion about SM or Dacia Felix opening a bank in Britain. Through Owen SM is believed to have obtained a £10 million facility from a London bank. Owen is himself the target of a Scotland Yard investigation over allegations of obtaining loans by deception.

These plans may now be somewhat handicapped by the removal of Muresan and the action taken by the Rumanian central bank. A complaint has also been made to the Swiss authorities that Muresan obtained control of a small local bank using Dacia Felix money. Muresan denies all the allegations made against him concerning Dacia Felix. But then he would, wouldn't he?

OLD HABITS die hard, especially when they are profitable. So it has taken but a few months for Paul Levinson to get into his usual routine at Hay & Robertson. Shareholders are to vote next week on a proposed deal whereby the company that Levinson and his son Mark took control of last August will acquire a property for £600,000 cash.

The property, in London's King's Cross, just happens to have been occupied by H&R since Levinson moved in with Mark as his non-executive front. It also just happens to be leased (although only until June) from a company jointly owned by Palan Trust which just happens to have been set up by Paul for the benefit of Mark and other family members. So as H&R is buying the freehold, no more lease payments by Palan. No doubt Levinson would say the deal is a steal for H&R, who will receive a rental income from ohtre tenants/ But why did the company need to buy when it would have the right to renew its lease on possibly better terms in June?

Surprisingly, or rather not, shareholders remain uninformed as to the identity of their and Palan's landlord or the identity of Palan's partner in the lease.

Meanwhile H&R also supplied staff to the part-Palan-owned company "to enable it to fulfil outstanding orders" in return for use of certain assets. How generous! And H&R paid £180,000 for artwork previously acquired by the same Palan-linked concern.

All par for the Levinson course. How long will it be before H&R finds a good reason to acquire the other London property it has leased from Palan and partner since the Levinsons arrived?

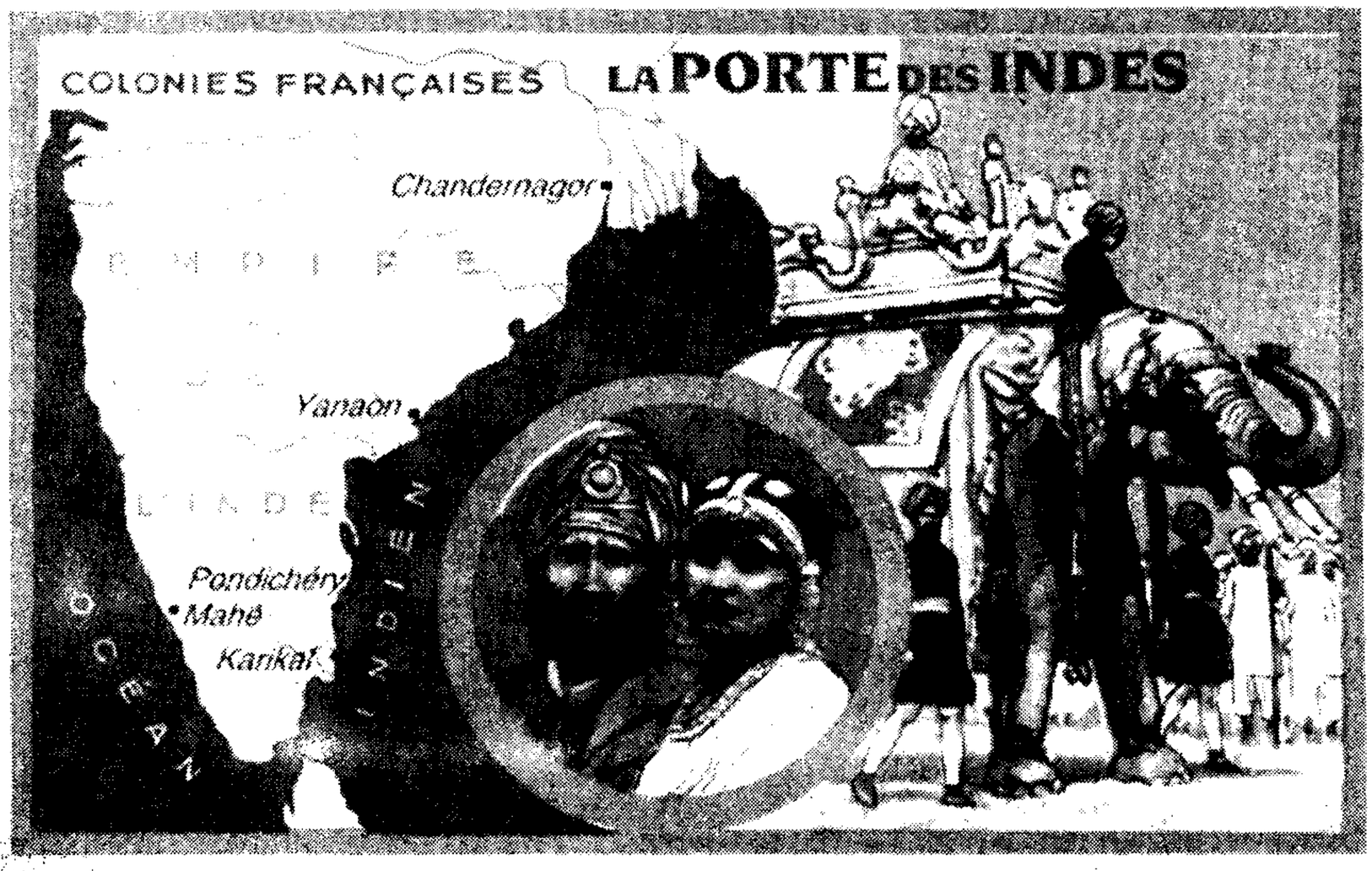
SUPPORTERS of Richmond rugby club will no doubt be glad to learn that they have a new generous backer in Ashley Levett, described as "a millionaire living in Monaco". Levett is to inject up to £3 million into the somewhat reduced Richmond in the current fashion for rich men to play at running rugby clubs.

Until last year Levett was not a resident of Monaco, particularly admired by its expatriate inhabitants, such as those freedom-loving newspaper owners the Barclay twins, for its tax-free climate. He was living down in Winchester, where he also owned the local rugby club.

Levett, 35, is somewhat better known, if not locally, for being part owner of Winchester Commodities Group which has recently attracted the attention of the Securities & Futures Authority. The SFA has been interested in copper deals done by Winchester for the Chilean copper group Codelco — the victim of a Leeson style fraud by its top trader, now in custody in Chile. It has not been suggested that Winchester was involved in the fraud.

Levett's interest in Monaco is not surprising given that Winchester paid one of his companies fees approaching £15 million last year. Levett resigned all his Winchester directorships last June. So Richmond no doubt represents a hobby that can be run out of the tax-free petty cash.

'Slicker'



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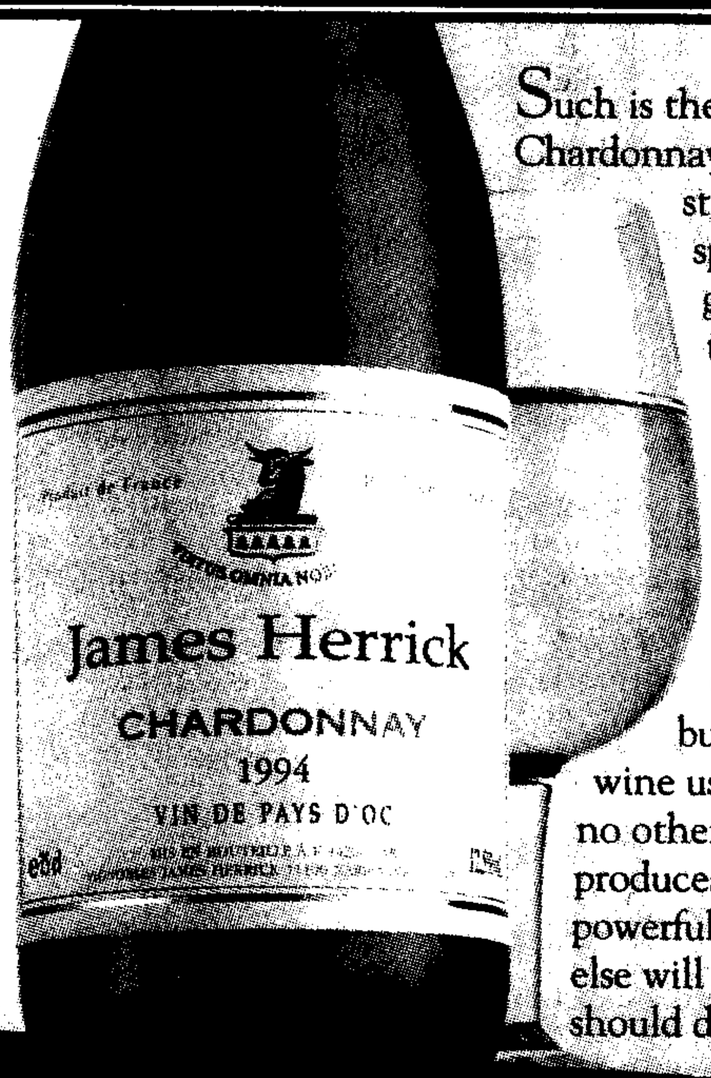

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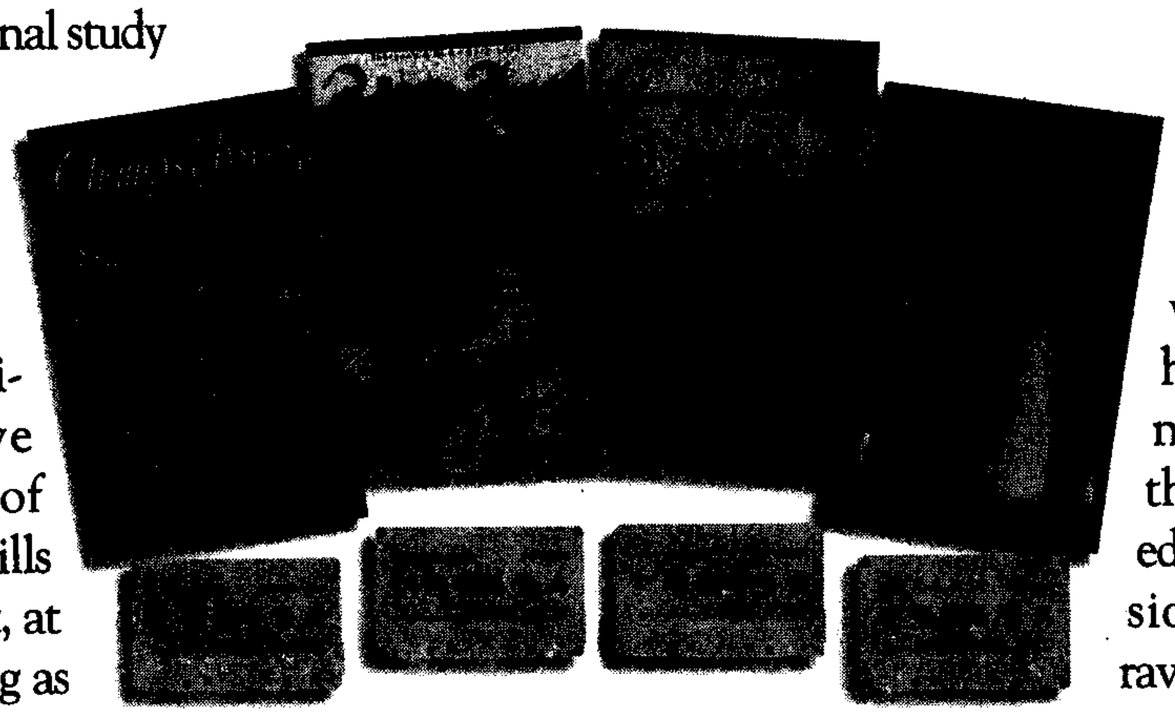

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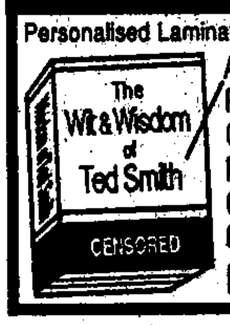

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QUOTE

The Townswomen's Guild is to debate the decriminalisation of prostitution at its annual meeting. The motion is "The Townswomen's Guild urges the Government to review the laws on prostitution so that women working in this area are no longer dealt with under the criminal justice system." The other motion being debated is that travel agents abolish the single person's supplement.

Guardian

SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray. See Page 30.

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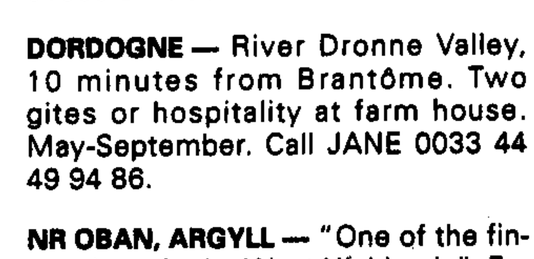

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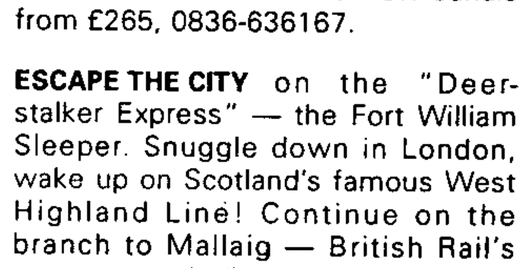

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ATTRACTIVE MALE (39) seeks happiness with a caring female. Interests: history, philosophy, music. Currently unhappily attached. London/SE. Box 1992.

ARE YOU A BRIGHT, attractive, professional female, 25-34? If so, tall, slim, intelligent male, based London/Dorset, who likes sports, good books and good company wltm you. Box 3492.

PRETTY PETITE brunette seeks tall, handsome rugby player (under 35) for possible match? Cardiff/Swansea. Photo please. No Groggs! Box 3792.

WENDY ANSWERED my ad (Box 1786, 6/12/95, Loews Hotel notepaper) but didn't include telephone number. Please send urgently. Box 2293.

DID YOU CRY with Johnny Ray? Glos. Graduate woman, tied, humorous, iconoclastic, seeks thinking, literary man for light-hearted friendship. Photo please. Box 2393.

VIRILE PROFESSIONAL male (42, single, 5'10", own hair, etc) with good looks, charm and modesty seeks glamorous, solvent madwoman with P. Eye soh and own brain (not on HP) for mutual stimulation purposes. Social skills will include needlepoint, tapestry, darts, intelligent conversation (although 1 out of 4 will do). Ability to travel important although not necessary. Please reply to Box 2593 with (recent) photo. Age probably immaterial until 42.

BUSINESSMAN, 34, 5'10", good-looking, generous, single, but attached, seeks tall, slim, discreet lady with definite exhibitionist tendencies. Photo, phone please. Box 2793.

BEAUTIFUL BRUNETTE, 32, slim, independent, witty and warm, seeks tall, caring, professional gentleman for country walks, wining/dining and romance. Home counties. Box 2893.

DISCERNING 35 year old female graduate seeks erudite, worldly, unencumbered, funny man. London. Box 2993.

INTELLIGENT, GORGEOUS female, 31, fully equipped with fire and music — safely married; seeks well-heeled man 40-60 for uncomplicated, mutually rewarding, longterm relationship. If you enjoy good food, wine and travel, write and let's rendezvous. London. Box 3393.

BOND GIRL (23/35) required by 007 (39), file/photo exchanged. Box 1193.

TALL, DARK AND handsome 30+++ investment banker, upmarket, Oxbridge educated, exotic origin, attached — seeks gorgeous gal (or similar) for unbridled pursuit of (daytime) hedonistic pleasures. Complete discretion, City/West End (London) preferred. Photo please. Box 6792.

BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA, 27, fit, smart, seeks enlightenment with slim lady (25-35) to attain sexual nirvana. Yorkshire. Box 3992.

ATTRACTIVE MAN, 36, single, is searching for an attractive female for dialectical investigation and more. Box 4792.

SIGNIFICANT LOVER sought by charismatic, slim, attractive, married woman graduate. I'm 38. You're tall, humorous, adventurous, public school/officer calibre. Photograph please. Box 0894.

HANDSOME, WEALTHY (but shy) playboy bachelor, 38, nice house, fabulous toys, seeks beautiful, intelligent, country-loving career type girl, 18-34ish, with long silky hair, long slender legs and long red nails; West Midlands/anywhere: Good letter and photo guarantees reply — who knows what 1996 may bring? Box 4692.

MARRIED MAN SEEKS clean discreet lady. Wine, dine, adult fun, friendship. Box 1594.

WOMAN WHO BELIEVES "sex" is what posh people have coal delivered in, seeks generous, witty, intelligent man to disillusion her... slowly. Box 1694.

S. DEVON, 40s, interesting professional male who enjoys life seeks attractive woman with gsoh for springtime adventures. Box 1794.

EASILY LOVED MAN (36) — attached, of course — seeks cheerful, affectionate woman (30-40ish) for that torrid affair, ono! London. Box 1894.

ATTACHED PROFESSIONAL man, 49, gsoh, caring, intelligent, n/s; seeks woman with similar attributes for discreet affair. Surrey/Hants. Box 0994.

PETE, 40s, SLIM, good-looking, attached, Harley Davidson owner, seeks slim lady to hold on tight (Surrey). Box 1094.

DEMANDING, INQUISITIVE woman sought by responding responsive male, 43. Box 1194.

WE ARE TWO London ladies (late twenties) interested in travel, reading, stimulating conversation, who wish to be wined and dined by two likeminded men age 25-40.

CAN I MAKE YOUR heart beat faster? London professional man seeks warm sensual woman for fun and friendship. Phone 0181 444 8950.

"TOO HAPPILY SET in my own ways to be conventional. Too comfy to change." Lady 35 browsing. Might suit generous, intelligent, witty chap, content with his own company. Box 1494.

SOHO LOCATOR

http://www.internet.net/scc/mad4map

FWDP is producing a map and guide to Soho promoting businesses and amenities in the area. With support from The Soho Society, Private Eye, The West Soho Association and the Soho Restaurateurs Association 50,000 copies will be printed.

The Locator will be available to visitors to Soho and sent to everyone in the area. It will be renewed annually and based on the popular design style of the Soho Jazz Festival Guide published by ourselves.

The map will also be available on the internet (see Cork address opposite) and is expected to be the most popular guide ever to the area.

If you would like a free copy on publication in March then please send a SAE to:-
FWDP, 108 Great Russell Street London WC1B 3NA

If you would like to promote your business in Soho then please call us on 0171 436 9220

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LEROS Gentle rolling hills. Secluded bays, picturesque harbours, sparkling seas.
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Please complete in block capitals

1. Mr ❒ Mrs ❒ Ms ❒

Surname:_____

First Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

_____ Post Code:_____

Tel No._____

I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒
Age:_____ Height:_____
Occupation:_____
Religion:_____
Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒
Attractiveness:
Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

3. Education

Private / Public ❒ Grammar ❒
Comprehensive ❒
Secondary Modern ❒

O Levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒
Further Education ❒
University / Professional Equivalent ❒
Technical Qualification ❒

4. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

❒ Affectionate ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

5. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly)

❒ Do you prefer town life?
❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Do you have many friends of your own sex?
❒ Are you interested in current affairs?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Do you like team activities?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you feel resentful when forced to act quickly?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
❒ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

6. Your interests

(sections 6. and 7. Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.)

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Entertaining ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Mixing with friends
❒ Walking ❒ Children
❒ Cinema ❒ D.I.Y. / Crafts
❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music ❒ Sightseeing

7. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:_____ Maximum age:_____
Height: min._____ max._____Don't mind ❒
Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒
Don't mind ❒
Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒
Attractiveness:
Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

Dept. PE 49

Please answer the questions above, cut out this page and send it to us at Dateline 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AL ***or call us now on (01869) 324 100***

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle St, London W1. 0171-437 4017. Printed by East End Offset Ltd, Empson St, London E3 3LT. Distributed by P.E. Distribution, Mortimer Hse, 230/236 Lavender Hill, London SW11. 0171-223 9971